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TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIRST.

THE MOR:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIRST.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK I.

Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul, lord of Atha in Connaught, the most potent chief of the race of the Firbolg, having murdered, at Temora the royal palace, Cormac the son of Artho, the young king of Ireland, usurped the throne. Cormac was lineally descended from Conat the son of Trenmor, the great grandfather of Fingal, king of those Caledonians, who inhabited the western coast of Scotland. Fingal repented the behaviour of Cairbar, and resolved to pass over into Ireland, with an army, to re-establish the royal family on the Irish throne. Early intelligence of his designs coming to Cairbar, he assembled some of his tribes in Ulster, and at the same time ordered his brother Cathmor, to follow him speedily with an army, from Temora. Such was the situation of affairs, when the Caledonian fleet appeared on the coast of Ulster.

The poem opens in the morning. Cairbar is represented as retired from the rest of the army, when one of his scouts brought him news of the landing of Fingal. He assembles a council of his chiefs. Foldath the chief of Moma haughtily despises the enemy; and is reprimanded warmly by Malthos. Cairbar, after hearing their debate, orders a feast to be prepared, to which, by his bard Olla, he invites Oscar the son of Ossian; resolving to pick a quarrel with that hero, and to have some pretext for killing him. Oscar came to the feast; the quarrel happened: the followers of both fought, and Cairbar and Oscar fell by mutual wounds. The noise of

ARGUMENT to Book I.

the battle reached Fingal's army. The king came on, to the relief of Oscar, and the Irish fell back to the army of Cathmor, who was advanced to the banks of the river Lubar, on the heath of Moi-lena. Fingal, after mourning over his grandson, ordered Ullin the chief of his bards, to carry his body to Morven, to be there interred. Night coming on, Althan, the son of Conachar, relates to the king the particulars of the murder of Cormac. Fillan, the son of Fingal, is sent to observe the motions of Cathmor by night, which concludes the action of the first day. The scene of this book is a plain, near the hill of Mora, which rose on the borders of the heath of Moi-lena, in Ulster.

TEMO.

TEMORA:

AN EPIC POEM *).

BOOK FIRST.

The blue waves of Ullin roll in light,
The green hills are covered with day.
Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze.
Grey

*) The first book of Temora made its appearance in the collection of lesser pieces, which were subjoined to the epic poem of Fingal. When that collection was printed, little more than the opening of the present poem came, in a regular connection, to my hands. The second book, in particular, was very imperfect and confused. By means of my friends, I collected since all the broken fragments of Temora, that I formerly wanted; and the story of the poem, which was accurately preserved by many, enabled me to

Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. —
 Two green hills, with aged oaks, surround a
 nar-

reduce it into that order, in which it now appears. The title of Epic was imposed on the poem by myself. The technical terms of criticism were totally unknown to Ossian. Born in a distant age, and in a country remote from the seats of learning, his knowledge did not extend to Greek and Roman literature. If therefore, in the form of his poems, and in several passages of his diction, he resembles Homer, the similarity must proceed from nature, the original from which both drew their ideas. It is from this consideration that I have avoided, in this volume, to give parallel passages from other authors, as I had done, in some of my notes, on the former collection of Ossian's poems. It was far from my intention, to raise my author into a competition with the celebrated names of antiquity. The extensive field of renown affords ample room to all the poetical merit, which has yet appeared in the world, without overturning the character of one poet, to raise that of another on its ruins. Had Ossian even superior merit to Homer and Virgil, a certain partiality, arising from the fame deservedly bestowed upon them by the sanction of so many ages, would make us overlook it, and give them the preference,

narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there;

rence. Tho' their high merit does not stand in need of adventitious aid, yet it must be acknowledged, that it is an advantage to their fame, that the posterity of the Greeks and Romans, either do not at all exist, or are not now objects of contempt or envy to the present age. Nor

Tho' this poem of Ossian has not perhaps all the *minutiae*, which Aristotle, from Homer, lays down as necessary to the conduct of an epic poem, yet, it is presumed, it has all the grand essentials of the epopœa. Unity of time, place, and action is preserved throughout. The poem opens in the midst of things; what is necessary of preceding transactions to be known, is introduced by episodes afterwards; not formally brought in, but seemingly rising immediately from the situation of affairs. The circumstances are grand, and the diction animated; neither descending into a cold meanness, nor swelling into ridiculous bombast.

The reader will find some alterations in the diction of this book. These are drawn from more correct copies of the original, which came to my hands, since the former publication. As the

there; on its banks stood Cairbar *) of Atha.
 — His spear supports the king: the red eyes
 of his fear are sad. Cormac rises in his soul,
 with all his ghastly wounds. The grey form
 of the youth appears in darkness; blood pours
 from his airy sides. — Cairbar thrice threw
 his spear on earth; and thrice he stroked his
 beard. His steps are short; he often stops; and
 tosses his sinewy arms. He is like a cloud in
 the desert, that varies its form to every blast:
 the

most part of the poem is delivered down by tra-
 dition, the text is sometimes various and inter-
 polated. After comparing the different readings,
 I always made choice of that, which agreed best
 with the spirit of the context.

*) Cairbar, the son of Borbhar-duthul, was descend-
 ed lineally from Larthon the chief of the Fir-
 bolg, the first colony who settled in the south
 of Ireland. The Caël were in possession of the
 northern coast of that kingdom, and the first
 monarchs of Ireland were of their race. Hence
 arose those differences between the two nations,
 which terminated, at last, in the murder of Cor-
 mac, and the usurpation of Cairbar, lord of
 Atha, who is mentioned in this place.

the valleys are sad around, and fear, by turns,
the shower.

The king, at length, resumed his soul,
and took his pointed spear. He turned his eyes
to Moi-lena. The scouts of blue ocean came.
They came with steps of fear, and often looked
behind. Cairbar knew, that the mighty were
near, and called his gloomy chiefs.

The sounding steps of his warriors came.
They drew, at once, their swords. There Mor-
lath *) stood with darkened face. Hidalla's
long hair sighs in wind. Red-haired Cormac
bends

*) Mór-lath, great in the day of battle. Hidalla,
mildly looking hero. Cor-mac, expert at sea.
Málth-os, slow to speak. Foldath, generous.

Foldath, who is here strongly marked, makes
a great figure in the sequel of the poem. His fier-
ce, uncomplying character is sustained throughout.
He seems, from a passage in the second book,
to have been Cairbar's greatest confident, and
to have had a principal hand in the conspiracy
against Cormac king of Ireland. His tribe was
one of the most considerable of the race of the
Fir-bolg.

bends on his spear, and rolls his side-long-looking eyes. Wild is the look of Malthos from beneath two shaggy brows. — Foldath stands like an oozy rock, that covers its dark sides with foam. His spear is like Slimora's fir, that meets the wind of heaven. His shield is marked with the strokes of battle; and his red eye despises danger. These and a thousand other chiefs surrounded car-borne Cairbar, when the scout of ocean came, Mor-annal, from streamy Moi-lena. — His eyes hang forward from his face, his lips are trembling, pale.

Do the chiefs of Evin stand, he said, silent as the grove of evening? Stand they, like a silent wood, and Fingal on the coast? Fingal, the terrible in battle, the king of streamy Mor-ven. — Hast thou seen the warrior? said Cairbar with a sigh. Are his heroes many on the coast? Lifts he the spear of battle? Or comes the king in peace?

In peace he comes not, Cairbar, I have seen his forward spear *). It is a meteor of death:

*) Mor-annal here alludes to the particular appearance of Fingal's spear. — If a man, upon his

death: the blood of thousands is on its steel. —
He came first to the shore, strong in the grey
hair of age. Full rose his sinewy limbs, as he
strode in his might. That sword is by his
side, which gives no second *) wound. His
shield is terrible, like the bloody moon ascend-
ing thro' a storm. Then came Ossian king
of songs; and Morni's son, the first of men.
Connal leaps forward on his spear: Dermid
spreads his dark-brown locks. — Fillan bends
his bow, the young hunter of streamy Mor-
uth

his first landing in a strange country, kept the
point of his spear forward, it denoted in those
days, that he came in a hostile manner, and ac-
cordingly he was treated as an enemy; if he
kept the point behind him, it was a token of
friendship, and he was immediately invited to
the feast, according to the hospitality of the ti-
mes.

*) This was the famous sword of Fingal, made by
Luno, a smith of Lochlin, and after him poeti-
cally called the *son of Luno*: it is said of this
sword, that it killed a man at every stroke; and
that Fingal never used it, but in times of the
greatest danger.

uth *). — But who is that before them, like the dreadful course of a stream? It is the son of Ossian, bright between his locks. His long hair falls on his back. — His dark brows are half inclosed in steel. His sword hangs loose on his side. His spear glitters, as he moves. I fled from his terrible eyes, king of high Temora.

Then fly, thou feeble man, said Foldath in gloomy wrath: fly to the grey streams of thy land, son of the little soul! Have not I seen that Oscar? I beheld the chief in war. He is of the mighty in danger: but there are others who lift the spear. — Erin has many sons as brave, king of Temora of Groves! Let Foldath meet him in the strength of his course, and stop this mighty stream. — My spear is covered with the blood of the valiant; my shield is like the wall of Tura.

Shall

*) In some traditions Fergus the son of Fingal, and Usnoth chief of Etha, immediately follow Fillan in the list of the chiefs of Morven; but as they are not afterwards mentioned at all in the poem, I look upon the whole sentence to be an interpolation, and have therefore rejected it.

Shall Foldath *) alone meet the foe?
replied the dark-browed Malthos. Are they
not numerous on our coast, like the waters of
many streams? Are not these the chiefs, who
vanquished Swaran, when the sons of Erin fled?
And shall Foldath meet their bravest heroes?
Foldath of the heart of pride! take the strength
of the people; and let Malthos come. My
sword is red with slaughter, but who has heard
my words **)?

Sons of green Erin, said Hidalla ***), let
not Fingal hear your words. The foe might
re-

*) The opposite characters of Foldath and Malthos
are strongly marked in subsequent parts of the
poem. They appear always in opposition. The
feuds between their families, which were the
source of their hatred to one another, are men-
tioned in other poems.

**) That is, who has heard my vaunting? He intend-
ed the expression as a rebuke to the self-praise
of Foldath.

***) Hidalla was the chief of Clonra, a small district
on the banks of the lake of Lego. The beauty
of his person, his eloquence and genius for poe-
try, are afterwards mentioned.

rejoice, and his arm be strong in the land. —
Ye are brave, o warriors, and like the storms
of the desert; they meet the rocks without
fear, and overturn the woods. — But let us
move in our strength, flow as a gathered cloud.
— Then shall the mighty tremble; the
spear shall fall from the hand of the valiant. —
We see the cloud of death, they will say,
while shadows fly over their face. Fingal will
mourn in his age, and see his flying fame. —
The steps of his chiefs will cease in Morven:
the moss of years shall grow in Selma.

Cairbar heard their words, in silence, like
the cloud of a shower: it stands dark on Crom-
la, till the lightning bursts its sides: the valley
gleams with red light; the spirits of the storm
rejoice. — So stood the silent king of Te-
mora; at length his words are heard.

Spread the feast on Moi-lena; let my
hundred bards attend. Thou, red-hair'd Olla,
take the harp of the king. Go to Oscar
chief of swords, and bid him to our feast.
To-day we feast and hear the song; to-mor-
row break the spears. Tell him, that I have
raised

raised the tomb of Cathol *); that bards have sung to his ghost. — Tell him that Cairbar has heard his fame at the stream of resounding Carun **). Cathmor ***) is not here, Borbar-duthul's

*) Cathol the son of Marouinan, or Moran, was murdered by Cairbar, for his attachment to the family of Cormac. He had attended Oscar to the *war of Inis-thina*, where they contracted a great friendship for one another. Oscar immediately after the death of Cathol, had sent a formal challenge to Cairbar, which he prudently declined, but conceived a secret hatred against Oscar, and had beforehand contrived to kill him at the feast, to which he here invites him.

**) He alludes to the battle of Oscar against Caros, *king of ships*; who is supposed to be the same with Carausius the usurper.

***) Cathmor, *great in battle*, the son of Borbar-duthul, and brother of Cairbar king of Ireland, had, before the insurrection of the Firbolg, passed over into Inis-huna, supposed to be a part of South-Britain, to assist Connor king of that place, against his enemies. Cathmor was successful in the war, but, in the course of it, Connor was either killed, or died a natural death. Cairbar, upon intelligence of the designs of Fingal to dethrone him, had dispatched a messenger

duthul's generous race. He is not here with his thousands, and our arms are weak. Cathmor is a foe to strife at the feast: his soul is bright as that sun. But Cairbar shall fight with Oscar, chief of the woody Temora! His words for Cathol were many; the wrath of Cairbar burns. He shall fall on Moi-lena: my fame shall rise in blood.

Their faces brightened round with joy. They spread over Moi-lena. The feast of shells is prepared. The songs of bards arise. We heard *) the voice of joy on the coast: we thought

ger for Cathmor, who returned into Ireland a few days before the opening of the poem.

Cairbar here takes advantage of his brother's absence, to perpetrate his ungenerous designs against Oscar; for the noble spirit of Cathmor, had he been present, would not have permitted, the laws of that hospitality, for which he was so renowned himself, to be violated. The brothers form a contrast: we do not detest the mean soul of Cairbar more, than we admire the disinterested and generous mind of Cathmor.

(*) Fingal's army heard the joy that was in Cairbar's camp. The character given of Cathmor is agreeable to the times. Some, through ostentation,

thought that mighty Cathmor came. Cathmor
the friend of strangers! the brother of red-hair-
ed

tion, were hospitable; and others fell naturally into a custom handed down from their ancestors. But what marks strongly the character of Cathmor, is his aversion to praise; for he is represented to dwell in a wood, to avoid the thanks of his guests; which is still a higher degree of generosity, than that of Axylus in Homer: for the poet does not say, but the good man might, at the head of his own table, have heard with pleasure the praise bestowed on him by the people he entertained.

No nation in the world carried hospitality to a greater length, than the ancient Scots. It was even infamous, for many ages, in a man of condition, to have the door of his house shut at all: LEST, as the bards express it, THE STRANGER SHOULD COME AND BEHOLD HIS CONTRACTED SOUL. Some of the chiefs were possessed of this hospitable disposition to an extravagant degree; and the bards, perhaps upon a selfish account, never failed to recommend it, in their eulogiums. *Cean-nia' na dai'*, or *the point, to which all the roads of the strangers lead*, was an invariable epithet given by them to the chiefs; on the contrary, they distinguished the inhospitable

ed Cairbar. Their souls were not the same.
The light of heaven was in the bosom of Cath-
mor.

table by the title of *the cloud which the strangers shun*. This last however was so uncommon, that in all the old poems, I have ever met with, I found but one man branded with this ignominious appellation; and that, perhaps, only founded upon a private quarrel, which subsisted between him and the patron of the bard, who wrote the poem.

We have a story of this hospitable nature, handed down by tradition, concerning one of the first Earls of Argyle. This nobleman, hearing that an Irishman, of great quality, intended to make him a visit, with a very numerous retinue of his friends and dependants, burnt the castle of Dunora, the seat of his family, lest it should be too small to entertain his guests, and received the Irish in tents on the shore. Extravagant as this behaviour might seem in our days, it was admired and applauded in those times of hospitality, and the Earl acquired considerable fame by it, in the songs of the bards.

The open communication with one another, which was the consequence of their hospitality, did not a little tend to improve the understanding
and

mor. His towers rose on the banks of Atha:
seven paths led to his halls. Seven chiefs stood
on

and enlarge the ideas of the ancient Scots. It is to this cause, we must attribute that sagacity and sense, which the common people, in the highlands, possess, still, in a degree superior even to the vulgar of more polished countries. When men are crowded together in great cities, they see indeed many people, but are acquainted with few. They naturally form themselves into small societies, and their knowledge scarce extends beyond the alley or street they live in; add to this that the very employment of a mechanic tends to contract the mind. The ideas of a peasant are still more confined. His knowledge is circumscribed within the compass of a few acres; or, at most, extends no further than the nearest market-town. The manner of life among the inhabitants of the highlands is very different from these. As their fields are barren, they have scarce any domestic employment. Their time is spent therefore in an extensive wilderness, where they feed their cattle, and these, by straying far and wide, carry their keepers after them, at times, to all the different settlements of the clans. There they are received with hospitality and good cheer; which, as they tend to display the minds of the hosts, afford an opportunity to the guests

on the paths, and called the stranger to the feast. But Cathmor dwelt in the wood, to avoid the voice of praise.

Olla came with his songs. Oscar went to Cairbar's feast. Three hundred warriors strode along Moi-lena of the streams. The grey dogs bounded on the heath, their howling reached afar. Fingal saw the departing hero: the soul of the king was sad. He dreaded Cairbar's gloomy thoughts, amidst the feast of shells.

My son raised high the spear of Cormac: an hundred bards met him with songs. Cairbar concealed with smiles the death, that was dark in his soul. The feast is spread, the shells re-found: joy brightens the face of the host. But it was like the parting beam of the sun, when he is to hide his red head in a storm.

Cairbar

to make their observations on the different characters of men; which is the true source of knowledge and acquired sense. Hence it is that a common highlander is acquainted with a greater number of characters, than any of his own rank living in the most populous cities.

Cairbar rose in his arms; darkness gathered on his brow. The hundred harps ceased at once. The clang *) of shields was heard. Far distant on the heath Olla raised his song of woe. My son knew the sign of death; and rising seized his spear.

Oscar! said the dark-red Cairbar, I behold the spear **) of Inisfail. The spear of Temorra *) glitters in thy hand, son of woody Morven!

*) When a chief was determined to kill a person already in his power, it was usual to signify that his death was intended, by the sound of a shield struck with the blunt end of a spear; at the same time that a bard at a distance raised the *death-song*. A ceremony of another kind was long used in Scotland upon such occasions. Every body has heard, that a bull's head was served up to Lord Douglas in the castle of Edinburgh, as a certain signal of his approaching death.

**) Cormac, the son of Arth, had given the spear, which is here the foundation of the quarrel, to Oscar, when he came to congratulate him, upon Swaran's being expelled from Ireland.

*) Ti-mor-rath, *the house of good fortune*, the name of the royal palace of the supreme kings of Ireland.

ven! It was the pride of an hundred **) kings,
the death of heroes of old. Yield it, son of Os-
sian, yield it to car-borne Cairbar.

Shall I yield, Oscar replied, the gift of
Erin's injured king; the gift of fair-haired Cor-
mac, when Oscar scattered his foes? I came to
Cormac's halls of joy, when Swaran fled from
Fingal. Gladness rose in the face of youth: he
gave the spear of Temora. Nor did he give it
to the feeble, o Cairbar, neither to the weak
in soul. The darkness of thy face is no storm
to me; nor are thine eyes the flames of death.
Do I fear thy clanging shield? Tremble I at
Olla's song? No: Cairbar, frighten the feeble;
Oscar is a rock.

And wilt thou not yield the spear? replied
the rising pride of Cairbar. Are thy words so
mighty,

**) *Hundred* here is an indefinite number, and is
only intended to express a great many. It was
probably the hyperbolical phrases of bards, that
gave the first hint to the Irish Senachies, to place
the origin of their monarchy in so remote a pe-
riod, as they have done.

mighty, because Fingal is near? Fingal with aged locks, from Morven's hundred groves! He has fought with little men. But he must vanish before Cairbar, like a thin pillar of mist before the winds of Atha *).

Were he who fought with little men, near Atha's darkening chief: Atha's darkening chief would yield green Erin to his rage. Speak not of the mighty, o Cairbar! but turn thy sword on me. Our strength is equal: but Fingal is renowned! the first of mortal men!

Their people saw the darkening chiefs. Their crowding steps are heard around. Their eyes roll in fire. A thousand swords are half-unsheathed. Red-haired Olla raised the song of battle: the trembling joy of Oscar's soul arose; the wonted joy of his soul, when Fingal's horn was heard.

Dark as the swelling wave of ocean before the rising winds, when it bends its head near
a coast,

*) Atha, *shallow river*: the name of Cairbar's seat in Connaught.

a coast, came on the host of Cairbar. —
 Daughter of Toscar *)! why that tear? He is
 not fallen yet. Many were the deaths of his
 arm, before my hero fell! — Behold, they fall
 before my son, like the groves in the desert,
 when an angry ghost rushes through night,
 and takes their green heads in his hand! Mor-
 lath falls: Maronnan dies: Conachar trembles
 in his blood. Cairbar shrinks before Oscar's
 sword; and creeps in darkness behind his stone.
 He lifted the spear in secret, and pierced my
 Oscar's side. He falls forward on his shield:
 his knee sustains the chief. But still his spear
 is in his hand. — See, gloomy Cairbar **)
 falls! The steel pierced his forehead, and divid-
 ed his red hair behind. He lay, like a shatter-
 ed

*) The poet means Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, to whom he addresses that part of the poem, which relates to the death of Oscar her lover.

**) The Irish historians place the death of Cairbar, in the latter end of the third century: they say, he was killed in battle against Oscar the son of Ossian, but deny that he fell by his hand. As they have nothing to go upon, but the traditions of their bards, the translator thinks that the ac-
 count

ed rock, which Cromla shakes from its shaggy side. But never more shall Oscar rise! he leans
on

count of Ossian is as probable; at the worst, it is but opposing one tradition to another.

It is, however, certain, that the Irish historians disguise, in some measure, this part of their history. An Irish poem on this subject, which, undoubtedly, was the source of their information, concerning the battle of Gabhra, where Cairbar fell, is just now in my hands. The circumstances are less to the disadvantage of the character of Cairbar, than those related by Ossian. As a translation of the poem (which, tho' evidently no very ancient composition, does not want poetical merit) would extend this note to too great a length, I shall only give the story of it, in brief, with some extracts from the original Irish.

Oscar, says the Irish bard, was invited to a feast, at Temora, by Cairbar king of Ireland. A dispute arose between the two heroes, concerning the exchange of spears, which was usually made, between the guests and their host, upon such occasions. In the course of their altercation, Cairbar said, in a boastful manner, that he would hunt on the hills of Albin, and carry
the

on his bossy shield. His spear is in his terrible hand: Erin's sons stood distant and dark. Their shouts

the spoils of it into Ireland, in spite of all the efforts of its inhabitants. The original words are:

Briathar buan sin; Briathar buan
A bheireadh an Cairbre rua',
Gu tuga' se sealg, agus creach
A h'ALBIN an la'r na mhaireach.

Oscar replied, that, the next day, he himself would carry into Albin the spoils of the five provinces of Ireland, in spite of the opposition of Cairbar.

Briathar eile an aghai' sin
A bheirea' an t'Oscar, og, calina
Gu'n tugad se sealg agus creach
Do dh'ALBIN an la'r na mhaireach, &c.

Oscar, in consequence of his threats, begun to lay waste Ireland; but as he returned with the spoil into Ulster, through the narrow pass of Cabhra (Caoilghlen - Ghabhra) he was met by Cairbar, and a battle ensued, in which both the heroes fell by mutual wounds. The bard gives a very curious list of the followers of Oscar, as they

shouts arose, like crowded streams; *Moi-lena* echoed wide.

Fingal heard the sound; and took his father's spear. His steps are before us on the heath. He spoke the words of woe. I hear the noise of war. Young Oscar is alone. Rise, sons of Morven; join the hero's sword.

Ossian rushed along the heath. Fillan bounded over *Moi-lena*. Fingal strode in his strength, and the light of his shield is terrible. The sons of Erin saw it far distant; they trembled in their souls. They knew that the wrath of the king arose: and they foresaw their death. We first arrived; we fought; and Erin's chiefs withstood our rage. But when the king came, in the sound of his course, what heart of steel could stand! Erin fled over *Moi-lena*. Death pursued their flight.

We

they marched to battle. They appear to have been five hundred in number, commanded, as the poet expresses it, by *five heroes of the blood of kings*. This poem mentions Fingal, as arriving from Scotland, before Oscar died of his wounds.

We saw Oscar on his shield. We saw his blood around. Silence darkened every face. Each turned his back, and wept. The king strove to hide his tears. His grey beard whistled in the wind. He bent his head above his son. His words were mixed with sighs.

And art thou fallen, Oscar, in the midst of thy course? the heart of the aged beats over thee! He sees thy coming wars. The wars which ought to come he sees, but they are cut off from thy fame. When shall joy dwell at Selma? When shall grief depart from Morven? My sons fall by degrees: Fingal shall be the last of his race. The fame which I have received shall pass away: my age will be without friends. I shall sit a grey cloud in my hall: nor shall I hear the return of a son, in the midst of his sounding arms. Weep, ye heroes of Morven! never more shall Oscar rise!

And they did weep, o Fingal; dear was the hero to their souls. He went out to battle, and the foes vanished; he returned, in peace, amidst their joy. No father mourned his son slain in youth; no brother his brother of love.

They

They fell, without tears, for the chief of the people was low! Bran *) is howling at his feet: gloomy Luäth is sad, for he had often led them to the chace; to the bounding roe of the desert.

When Oscar saw his friends around, his breast arose with sighs. — The groans, he said, of aged chiefs; the howling of my dogs; the sudden burst of songs of grief, have melted Oscar's soul. My soul, that never melted before; it was like the steel of my sword. — Ossian, carry me to my hills! Raise the stones of my renown. Place the horn of the deer, and my sword, within my narrow dwelling. — The torrent hereafter may raise the earth: the hunter may find the steel, and say: "This has been Oscar's sword."

Andallest thou, son of my fame! And shall I never see thee, Oscar! When others hear of their sons, I shall not hear of thee. The moss is on thy four grey stones; the mournful

*) Bran was one of Fingal's dogs. — He was so remarkable for his fleetness, that the poet, in a piece which is not just now in the translator's hands, has given him the same properties with Virgil's Camilla. Bran signifies a *mountain-stream*.

ful wind is there. The battle shall be fought without him : he shall not pursue the dark-brown hinds. When the warrior returns from battles, and tells of other lands : I have seen a tomb, he will say, by the roaring stream, the dark dwelling of a chief. He fell by car-borne Oscar, the first of mortal men. — I, perhaps, shall hear his voice ; and a beam of joy will rise in my soul.

The night would have descended in sorrow, and morning returned in the shadow of grief ; our chiefs would have stood like cold dropping rocks on Moi-lena, and have forgot the war : did not the king disperse his grief, and raise his mighty voice. The chiefs, as new-wakened from dreams, lift up their heads around.

How long on Moi-lena shall we weep ; or pour our tears in Ullin ? The mighty will not return. Oscar shall not rise in his strength. The valiant must fall one day, and be no more known on his hills. — Where are our fathers, o warriors ! the chiefs of the times of old ? They have set like stars that have shone : we only hear the sound of their praise. But they were renowned in their day, the terror of other times. Thus shall we pass, o warriors, in the
day

day of our fall. Then let us be renowned,
when we may; and leave our fame behind us,
like the last beams of the sun, when he hides
his red head in the west.

Ullin, my aged bard! take the ship of the
king. Carry Oscar to Selma of harps. Let the
daughters of Morven weep. We shall fight in
Erin for the race of fallen Cormac. The days
of my years begin to fail: I feel the weakness
of my arm. My fathers bend from their clouds,
to receive their grey-hair'd son. But, before
I go hence, one beam of fame shall rise: so
shall my days end, as my years begun, in fa-
me: my life shall be one stream of light to
bards of other times.

Ullin rais'd his white sails: the wind of
the south came forth. He bounded on the wa-
ves towards Selma. — *) I remained in my
grief, but my words were not heard. — The
feast is spread on Moi-lena: an hundred heroes
reared the tomb of Cairbar: but no song is
rais'd over the chief: for his soul had been
dark and bloody. The bards remembered the
fall of Cormac! what could they say in Cair-
bar's praise?

The

*) The poet speaks in his own person.

The night came rolling down. The light of an hundred oaks arose. Fingal sat beneath a tree. Old Althan *) stood in the midst. He told the tale of fallen Cormac. Althan the son of Conachar, the friend of car-borne Cuchullin: he dwelt with Cormac in windy Temora, when Semo's son fought with generous Torlath. — The tale of Althan was mournful, and the tear was in his eye.

) The setting sun was yellow on Doira *). Grey evening began to descend. Temora's woods shook with the blast of the unconstant wind. A cloud, at length, gathered in the west, and a red star looked from behind its edge. — I stood in the wood alone, and saw

*) Althan, the son of Conachar, was the chief bard of Arth king of Ireland. After the death of Arth, Althan attended his son Cormac, and was present at his death. — He had made his escape from Cairbar, by the means of Cathmor, and coming to Fingal, related, as here, the death of his master Cormac.

**) Althan speaks.

***) Doira, *the woody side of a mountain*; it is here a hill in the neighbourhood of Temora.

saw a ghost on the darkening air. His stride extended from hill to hill: his shield was dim on his side. It was the son of Semo: I knew the warrior's face. But he passed away in his blast; and all was dark around. — My soul was sad. I went to the hall of shells. A thousand lights arose: the hundred bards had strung the harp. Cormac stood in the midst, like the morning-star, when it rejoices on the eastern hill, and its young beams are bathed in showers. — The sword of Artho *) was in the hand of the king; and he looked with joy on its polished studs: thrice he strove to draw it, and thrice he failed: his yellow locks are spread on his shoulders; his cheeks of youth are red. — I mourned over the beam of youth, for he was soon to set.

Althan! he said, with a smile, hast thou beheld my father? Heavy is the sword of the king, surely his arm was strong. O that I were like him in battle, when the rage of his wrath arose! then would I have met, like Cuchullin, the car-borne son of Cantéla! But years may come on, o Althan! and my arm be strong. —

Hast

*) Arth or Artho, the father of Cormac king of Ireland.

Hast thou heard of Semo's son, the chief of high Temora? He might have returned with his fame; for he promised to return to-night. My bards wait him with songs; my feast is spread in Temora.

I heard the king in silence. My tears began to flow. I hid them with my aged locks; but he perceived my grief.

Son of Conachar! he said, is the king of Tura *) low? Why bursts thy sigh in secret? And why descends the tear? — Comes the car-borne Torlath? Or the fount of the red-haired Cairbar? — They come! — for I behold thy grief. Mossy Tura's king is low! — Shall I not rush to battle? — But I cannot lift the spear! — O had mine arm the strength of Cuchullin, soon would Cairbar fly; the fame of my fathers would be renewed; and the deeds of other times!

He took his bow. The tears flow down, from both his sparkling eyes. — Grief saddens round: the bards bend forward, from their
hundred

*) Cuchullin is called the king of Tura, from a castle of that name on the coast of Ulster, where he dwelt, before he undertook the management of the affairs of Ireland, in the minority of Cormac.

hundred harps. The lone blast touched their trembling strings. The sound *) is sad and low.

A voice is heard at a distance, as of one in grief: it was Carril of other times, who came from dark Slimora **). — He told of the death of Cuchullin, and of his mighty deeds. The people were scattered round his tomb: their arms lay on the ground. They had forgot the war, for he, their fire, was seen no more.

But who, said the soft-voiced Carril, come like the bounding roes? their stature is like the young trees of the plain, growing in a shower: — Soft and ruddy are their cheeks; but fearless souls look forth from their eyes.

*) The prophetic sound, mentioned in other poems, which the harps of the bards emitted before the death of a person worthy and renowned. It is here an omen of the death of Cormac, which, soon after, followed.

**) Slimora, a hill in Connaught, near which Cuchullin was killed.

eyes. — Who but the sons of Usnoth *), the car-borne chiefs of Etha? The people rise on every side, like the strength of an half-extinguished fire, when the winds come, sudden, from the desert, on their rustling wings. — The sound of Caithbat's **) shield was heard. The

*) Usnoth, chief of Etha, a district on the western coast of Scotland, had three sons, Nathos, Althos and Ardan, by Sliffama the sister of Cuchullin. The three brothers, when very young, were sent over to Ireland by their father, to learn the use of arms under their uncle, whose military fame was very great in that kingdom. They had just arrived in Ulster, when the news of Cuchullin's death arrived. Nathos, the eldest of the three brothers, took the command of Cuchullin's army, and made head against Cairbar the chief of Atha. Cairbar having, at last, murdered young king Cormac, at Temora, the army of Nathos shifted sides, and the brothers were obliged to return into Ulster, in order to pass over into Scotland. The sequel of their mournful story is related, at large, in the poem of Darthula.

**) Caithbat was grandfather to Cuchullin; and his shield was made use of, to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family.

The heroes saw Cuchullin *) in Nathos. So rolled his sparkling eyes: his steps were such on heath. — Battles are fought at Lego: the sword of Nathos prevails. Soon shalt thou behold him in thy halls, king of Temora of Groves!

And soon may I behold the chiefs! replied the blue-eyed king. But my soul is sad for Cuchullin; his voice was pleasant in mine ear. — Often have we moved, on Dora, to the chace of the dark-brown hinds: his bow was unerring on the mountains. — He spoke of mighty men. He told of the deeds of my fathers; and I felt my joy. — But sit thou at the feast, o bard! I have often heard thy voice. Sing in the praise of Cuchullin; and of that mighty stranger **).

Day rose on woody Temora, with all the beams of the east. Trathin came to the hall, the son of old Gelláma ***). — I behold, he

*) That is, they saw a manifest likeness between the person of Nathos and Cuchullin.

**) Nathos the son of Usnoth.

***) Geal-lamha, *white-banded*.

he said, a dark cloud in the desert, king of Innisfail! a cloud it seemed at first, but now a croud of men. One strides before them in his strength; his red hair flies in the wind. His shield glitters to the beam of the east. His spear is in his hand.

Call him to the feast of Temora, replied the king of Erin. My hall is the house of strangers, son of the generous Gelláma! — Perhaps it is the chief of Etha, coming in the sound of his renown. — Hail, mighty *) stranger, art thou of the friends of Cormac? — But Carril, he is dark, and unlovely; and he draws his sword. Is that the son of Usnoth, bard of the times of old?

It is not the son of Usnoth, said Carril, but the chief of Atha. — Why comest thou in thy arms to Temora, Cairbar of the gloomy brow? Let not thy sword rise against Cormac! Whither dost thou turn thy speed?

He passed on in his darkness, and seized the hand of the king. Cormac foresaw his death, and

*) From this expression, we understand, that Cairbar had entered the palace of Temora, in the midst of Cormac's speech.

and the rage of his eyes arose. — Retire, thou gloomy chief of Atha: Nathos comes with battle. — Thou art bold in Cormac's hall, for his arm is weak. — The sword entered the side of the king: he fell in the halls of his fathers. His fair hair is in the dust. His blood is smoking round.

And art thou fallen in thy halls *), o son of noble Artho? The shield of Cuchullin was not near. Nor the spear of thy father. Mournful are the mountains of Erin, for the chief of the people is low! — Blest be thy soul, o Cormac! thou art darkened in thy youth.

My words came to the ears of Cairbar, and he closed us **) in the midst of darkness. He feared to stretch his sword to the bards ***), though his soul was dark. Long had we pined alone;

*) Althan speaks.

**) That is, himself and Carril, as it afterwards appears.

***) The persons of the bards were so sacred, that even he, who had just murdered his sovereign, feared to kill them.

alone: at length, the noble Cathmor *) came. — He heard our voice from the cave; he turned the eye of his wrath on Cairbar.

Chief of Atha! he said, how long wilt thou pain my soul? Thy heart is like the rock of the desert; and thy thoughts are dark. — But thou art the brother of Cathmor, and he will fight thy battles. — But Cathmor's soul is not like thine, thou feeble hand of war! The light of my bosom is stained with thy deeds: the bards will not sing of my renown. They may say, "Cathmor was brave, but he fought for gloomy Cairbar," They will pass over my tomb in silence: my fame shall not be heard. — Cairbar! loose the bards: they are the sons of other times. Their voice shall be heard in other years; after the kings of Temora have failed. —

We

*) Cathmor appears the same disinterested hero upon every occasion. His humanity and generosity were unparalleled: in short, he had no fault, but too much attachment to so bad a brother as Cairbar. His family-connection with Cairbar prevails, as he expresses it, over every other consideration, and makes him engage in a war, of which he did not approve.

We came forth at the words of the chief.
We saw him in his strength. He was like thy
youth, o Fingal, when thou first didst lift the
spear. — His face was like the plain of the
sun, when it is bright: no darkness travelled
over his brow. But he came with his thousands
to Ullin, to aid the red-haired Cairbar: and
now he comes, to revenge his death, o king
of woody Morven. —

And let him come, replied the king; I lo-
ve a foe like Cathmor. His soul is great; his
arm is strong; his battles are full of fame. —
But the little soul is a vapour that hovers round
the marshy lake: it never rises on the green
hill, lest the winds should meet it there: its
dwelling is in the cave, it sends forth the dart
of death.

Our young heroes, o warriors, are like
the renown of our fathers. — They fight in
youth; they fall: their names are in the song.
Fingal is amidst his darkening years. He must
not fall, as an aged oak, across a secret stream.
Near it are the steps of the hunter, as it lies
beneath the wind. “How has that tree fallen?”
He, whistling, strides along.

Raife

Raise the song of joy, ye bards of Morven! that our soul may forget the past. — The red stars look on us from the clouds, and silently descend. Soon shall the grey beam of the morning rise, and shew us the foes of Cormac. — Fillan! take the spear of the king; go to Mora's dark-brown side. Let thine eyes travel over the heath, like flames of fire. Observe the foes of Fingal, and the course of generous Cathmor. I hear a distant sound, like the falling of rocks in the desert. — But strike thou thy shield, at times, that they may not come through night, and the fame of Morven cease. — I begin to be alone, my son, and I dread the fall of my renown.

The voice of the bards arose. The king leaned on the shield of Trenmor. — Sleep descended on his eyes; his future battles rose in his dreams. The host are sleeping around. Dark-haired Fillan observed the foe. His steps are on a distant hill: we hear, at times, his clanging shield.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SECOND.

THE ROMAN

AND

EPIC POEM

BOOK SECOND

ARGUMENT to Book II.

This book opens, we may suppose, about midnight, with a soliloquy of Ossian, who had retired, from the rest of the army, to mourn for his son Oscar. Upon hearing the noise of Cathmor's army approaching, he went to find out his brother Fillan, who kept the watch, on the hill of Mora, in the front of Fingal's army. In the conversation of the brothers, the episode of Conar, the son of Trenmor, who was the first king of Ireland, is introduced; which lays open the origin of the contests between the Caël and Firbolg, the two nations who first possessed themselves of that Island. Ossian kindles a fire on Mora; upon which Cathmor desisted from the design he had formed of surprising the army of the Caledonians. He calls a council of his chiefs; reprimands Foldath for advising a night-attack, as the Irish army were so much superior in number to the enemy. The bard Fonar introduces the story of Crothar, the ancestor of the king, which throws further light on the history of Ireland, and the original pretensions of the family of Atha, to the throne of that kingdom. The Irish chiefs lie down to rest, and Cathmor himself undertakes the watch. In his circuit, round the army, he is met by Ossian.

ARGUMENT to Book II.

an. The interview of the two heroes is described. Cathmor obtains a promise from Ossian, to order a funeral elegy to be sung over the grave of Cairbar; it being the opinion of the times, that the souls of the dead could not be happy, till their elegies were sung by a bard. Morning comes. Cathmor and Ossian part; and the latter, casually meeting with Carril the son of Kinfena, sends that bard, with a funeral song, to the tomb of Cairbar.

TEMO.

T E M O R A:

A N

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SECOND.

*) **F**ather of heroes, Trenmor! dweller of ed-
 dying winds! where the dark-red course
 of thunder marks the troubled clouds! Open thou
 thy

*) Addresses to the spirits of deceased warriors are
 common, in the compositions of Ossian. He, how-
 ever, expresses them in such language, as pre-
 vents all suspicion of his paying divine honours
 to the dead, as was usual among other na-
 tions. — From the sequel of this apostrophe,
 it appears, that Ossian had retired from the rest
 of the army, to mourn, in secret, over the death
 of his son Oscar. This indirect method of nar-
 ration has much of the nature of the Drama,
 and is more forcible than a regular historical

D

chain

thy stormy halls, and let the bards of old be near: let them draw near, with their songs and their half-viewless harps. No dweller of misty valley comes; no hunter unknown at his streams; but

chain of circumstances. The abrupt manner of Ossian may often render him obscure to inattentive readers. Those who retain his poems, on memory, seem to be sensible of this; and usually give the history of the pieces minutely, before they begin to repeat the poetry.

Tho' this book has little action, it is not the least important part of Temora. The poet, in several episodes, runs up the cause of the war to the very source. The first population of Ireland, the wars between the two nations who originally possessed that Island, its first race of kings, and the revolutions of its government, are important facts, and are delivered by the poet, with so little mixture of the fabulous, that one cannot help preferring his accounts to the improbable fictions of the Scotch and Irish historians. The Milesian fables of those gentlemen bear about them the marks of a late invention. To trace their legends to their source would be no difficult task; but a disquisition of this sort would extend this note too far.

but the car-borne Oscar from the folds of war.
Sudden is thy change, my son, from what thou
wert on dark Moilena! The blast folds thee in
its skirt, and rustles along the sky.

Dost thou not behold thy father, at the
stream of night? The chiefs of Morven sleep
far-distant. They have lost no son. — But ye
have lost a hero, chiefs of streamy Morven!
Who could equal his strength, when battle roll-
ed against his side, like the darkness of crowd-
ed waters? — Why this cloud on Ossian's
soul? It ought to burn in danger. Erin is near
with her host. The king of Morven is alone.
—— Alone thou shalt not be, my father,
while I can lift the spear.

I rose, in my rattling arms. I listened to
the wind of night. The shield of Fillan *) is
not

*) We understand, from the preceding book, that
Cathmor was near with an army. When Cair-
bar was killed, the tribes who attended him, fell
back to Cathmor; who, as it afterwards appears,
had taken a resolution to surprize Fingal by
night. Fillan was dispatched to the hill of Mo-
ra, which was in the front of the Caledonians,

not heard. I shook for the son of Fingal. Why should the foe come, by night; and the dark-haired warrior fail? — Distant, fullen murmurs rise: like the noise of the lake of Lough, when its waters shrink, in the days of frost, and all its bursting ice resounds. The people of Lara look to heaven, and foresee the storm. — My steps are forward on the heath: the spear of Oscar in my hand. Red stars looked from high. I gleamed, along the night. — I saw Fillan silent before me, bending forward from Mora's rock. He heard the shout of

to observe the motions of Cathmor. In this situation were affairs, when Ossian, upon hearing the noise of the approaching enemy, went to find out his brother. Their conversation naturally introduces the episode, concerning Conar the son of Trenmor the first Irish monarch, which is so necessary to the understanding of the foundation of the rebellion and usurpation of Cairbar and Cathmor. — Fillan was the youngest of the sons of Fingal, then living. He and Bosmina, mentioned in the *battle of Lora*, were the only children of the king, by Clatho the daughter of Cathulla king of Inis-tore, whom he had taken to wife, after the death of Ros-crana, the daughter of Cormac Mac-Conar king of Ireland.

of the foe; the joy of his soul arose. He heard my sounding tread, and turned his lifted spear.

Comest thou, son of night, in peace? Or dost thou meet my wrath? The foes of Fingal are mine. Speak, or fear my steel. — I stand, not in vain, the shield of Morven's race.

Never mayst thou stand in vain, son of blue-eyed Clatho. Fingal begins to be alone; darkness gathers on the last of his days. Yet he has two *) sons, who ought to shine in war.

Who

*) That is, two sons in Ireland, Fergus, the second son of Fingal, was, at that time, on an expedition, which is mentioned in one of the lesser poems of Ossian. He, according to some traditions, was the ancestor of Fergus, the son of Ere or Arcath, commonly called *Fergus the second* in the Scotch histories. The beginning of the reign of Fergus, over the Scots, is placed, by the most approved annals of Scotland, in the fourth year of the fifth age: a full century after the death of Ossian. The genealogy of his family is recorded thus by the highland Senachies; *Fergus Mac-Arcath, Mac-Chongael, Mac-Fergus, Mac-Fiongael na buai'*: i. e. Fergus the son

Who ought to be two beams of light, near the steps of his departure.

Son of Fingal, replied the youth, it is not long since I raised the spear. Few are the marks of my sword in battle, but my soul is fire. The chiefs of Bolga *) crowd around the shield of generous Cathmor. Their gathering is on that heath. Shall my steps approach their host? I yielded to Oscar alone, in the strife of the race, on Cona.

Fillan, thou shalt not approach their host; nor fall before thy fame is known. My name is heard in song: when needful I advance. — From the skirts of night I shall view their gleam.

of Arcath, the son of Congal, the son of Fergus, the son of Fingal *the victorious*. This subject is treated more at large, in the dissertation prefixed to the poem.

*) The southern parts of Ireland went, for some time, under the name of Bolga, from the Firbolg or Belgæ of Britain, who settled a colony there. *Bolg* signifies a *quiver*, from which proceeds *Fir-bolg*, i. e. *bow-men*, so called from their using bows, more than any of the neighbouring nations.

gleaming tribes. — Why, Fillan, didst thou speak of Oscar, to call forth my sigh? I must forget *) the warrior, till the storm is rolled away. Sadness ought not to dwell in danger, nor the tear in the eye of war. Our fathers forgot their fallen sons, till the noise of arms was past. Then sorrow returned to the tomb, and the song of bards arose.

Conar

*) It is remarkable, that, after this passage, Oscar is not mentioned in all Temora. The situations of the characters who act in the poem, are so interesting, that others, foreign to the subject, could not be introduced with any lustre. Tho' the episode, which follows, may seem to flow naturally enough from the conversation of the brothers: yet I have shewn, in a preceding note, and, more at large, in the dissertation prefixed to this collection, that the poet had a farther design in view. It is highly probable, tho' the Irish annalists do not agree with Ossian in other particulars, that the Conar here mentioned is the same with their *Conar-mór*, i. e. *Conar the great*, whom they place in the first century.

Conar *) was the brother of Trathal, first of mortal men. His battles were on every coast. A thousand streams rolled down the blood of his foes. His fame filled green Erin, like a pleasant gale. The nations gathered in Ullin, and they blessed the king; the king of the

*) Conar, the first king of Ireland, was the son of Trenmor, the great-grand-father of Fingal. It was on account of this family-connection, that Fingal was engaged in so many wars in the cause of the race of Conar. Tho' few of the actions of Trenmor are mentioned in Ossian's poems, yet, from the honourable appellations bestowed on him, we may conclude, that he was, in the days of the poet, the most renowned name of antiquity. The most probable opinion concerning him is, that he was the first, who united the tribes of the Caledonians, and commanded them, in chief, against the incursions of the Romans. The genealogists of the North have traced his family far back, and given a list of his ancestors to *Cuanmór nan lan*, or Conmor of the swords, who, according to them, was the first who crossed the great sea, to Caledonia, from which circumstance his name proceeded, which signifies *Great ocean*. Genealogies of so ancient a date, however, are little to be depended upon.

the race of their fathers, from the land of hinds.

The chiefs *) of the south were gathered, in the darkness of their pride. In the horrid cave of Moma, they mixed their secret words. Thither often, they said, the spirits of their fathers came: shewing their pale forms from the chinky rocks, and reminding them of the honour of Bolga. — Why should Conar reign, the son of streamy Morven?

They came forth, like the streams of the desert, with the roar of their hundred tribes. Conar was a rock before them: broken they rolled on every side. But often they returned, and the sons of Ullin fell. The king stood, among the tombs of his warriors, and darkly bent

*) The chiefs of the Fir-bolg, who possessed themselves of the south of Ireland; prior, perhaps, to the settlement of the Caël of Caledonia, and the Hebrides, in Ulster. From the sequel, it appears, that the Fir-bolg were, by much, the most powerful nation; and it is probable, that the Caël must have submitted to them, had they not received succours from their mother-country, under the command of Conar.

bent his mournful face. His soul was rolled into itself; he marked the place, where he was to fall; when Trathal came, in his strength, the chief of cloudy Morven. — Nor did he come alone: Colgar *) was at his side; Colgar the son of the king and of white-bosomed Solin-corma.

As Trenmor, cloathed with meteors, descends from the halls of thunder, pouring the dark storm before him over the troubled sea: so Colgar descended to battle, and wasted the echoing field. His father rejoiced over the hero: but an arrow came. His tomb was raised,

*) Colg-er, *fiercely-looking warrior*. Sulin-corma, *blue eyes*. Colgar was the eldest of the sons of Trathal: Comhal, who was the father of Fingal, was very young, when the present expedition to Ireland happened. It is remarkable, that, of all his ancestors, the poet makes the least mention of Comhal; which, probably, proceeded from the unfortunate life and untimely death of that hero. From some passages, concerning him, we learn, indeed, that he was brave, but he wanted conduct, and, as Ossian expresses it, *his soul was dark*. This impartiality, with respect to a character so near him, reflects honour on the poet.

ed, without a tear. The king was to revenge his son. — He lightened forward in battle, till Bolga yielded at her streams.

When peace returned to the land, and his blue waves bore the king to Morven: then he remembered his son, and poured the silent tear. Thrice did the bards, at the cave of Furmóno, call the soul of Colgar. They called him to the hills of his land; he heard them in his mist. Trathal placed his sword in the cave, that the spirit of his son might rejoice.

*) Colgar, son of Trathal, said Fillan, thou wert renowned in youth! But the king has not marked my sword, bright-streaming on the field. I go forth with the crowd: I return, without my fame. — But the foe approaches, Ossian. I hear their murmur on the heath.

*) The poet begins here to mark strongly the character of Fillan, who is to make so great a figure in the sequel of the poem. He has the impatience, the ambition and fire, which are peculiar to a young hero. Kindled with the fame of Colgar, he forgets his untimely fall. — From Fillan's expressions in this passage, it would seem, that he was neglected by Fingal, on account of his youth.

heath. The sound of their steps is like thunder, in the bosom of the ground, when the rocking hills shake their groves, and not a blast pours from the darkened sky.

Sudden I turned on my spear, and raised the flame of an oak on high. I spread it large, on Mora's wind. Cathmor stopt in his course. — Gleaming he stood, like a rock, on whose sides are the wandering of blasts; which seize its echoing streams and clothe them over with ice. So stood the friend *) of strangers. The winds lift his heavy locks. Thou art the tallest of the race of Erin, king of streamy Atha!

First of bards, said Cathmor, Fonar **), call the chiefs of Erin. Call red-hair'd Cormar,

*) Cathmor is distinguished, by this honourable title, on account of his generosity to strangers, which was so great as to be remarkable even in those days of hospitality.

**) *Fonar*, the man of song. Before the introduction of Christianity a name was not imposed upon any person, till he had distinguished himself by some remarkable action, from which his name

mar, dark-browed Malthos, the wide-long-looking gloom of Marónan. Let the pride of Foldath appear: the red-rolling eye of Turlótho. Nor let Hidalla be forgot; his voice, in danger, is like the found of a shower, when it falls in the blasted vale, near Atha's failing stream.

They came, in their clanging arms. They bent forward to his voice, as if a spirit of their fathers spoke from a cloud of night. — Dreadful shone they to the light; like the fall of the stream of Brumo *), when the meteor lights it, before the nightly stranger. Shuddering, he stops in his journey, and looks up for the beam of the morn.

Why

name should be derived. Hence it is that the names in the poems of Ossian, suit so well with the characters of the persons who bear them.

*) Brumo was a place of worship (Fing. b. 6.) in Craca, which is supposed to be one of the isles of Shetland. It was thought, that the spirits of the deceased haunted it, by night, which adds more terror to the description introduced here. *The horrid circle of Brumo, where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of fear.* Fing.

*) Why delights Foldath, said the king, to pour the blood of foes, by night? Fails his arm in battle, in the beams of day? Few are the foes before us, why should we clothe us in mist? The valiant delight to shine, in the battles of their land. —

Thy counsel was in vain, chief of Moma; the eyes of Morven do not sleep. They are watchful, as eagles, on their mossy rocks. — Let each collect, beneath his cloud, the strength of his roaring tribe. To-morrow I move, in light, to meet the foes of Bolga! — Mighty **) was he, that is low, the race of Borbar-Duthul.

Not

*) From this passage, it appears, that it was Foldath who had advised the night-attack. The gloomy character of Foldath is properly contrasted to the generous, the open Cathmor. Ossian is peculiarly happy in opposing different characters, and, by that means, in heightening the features of both. Foldath appears to have been the favourite of Cairbar, and it cannot be denied but he was a proper enough minister to such a prince. He was cruel and impetuous, but seems to have had great martial merit.

**) By this exclamation Cathmor intimates, that he intends to revenge the death of his brother Cairbar.

Not unmarked, said Foldath, were my steps before thy race. In light, I met the foes of Cairbar; the warrior praised my deeds. — But his stone was raised without a tear. No bard sung *) over Erin's king; and shall his foes rejoice along their mossy hills? — No: they must not rejoice: he was the friend of Foldath. Our words were mixed, in secret, in Moma's silent cave; whilst thou, a boy in the field, pursuedst the thistle's beard. — With Moma's sons I shall rush abroad, and find the foe, on his dusky hills. Fingal shall lie without his song, the grey-haired king of Selma.

Dost thou think, thou feeble man, replied the chief of Atha; dost thou think, that he can fall, without his fame, in Erin? Could the bards be silent, at the tomb of the mighty Fingal? The song would burst in secret; and the spirit of the king rejoice. — It is, when thou shalt fall, that the bard shall forget the song. Thou art dark, chief of Moma, tho' thine arm is a tempest in war. — Do I forget

*) To have no funeral elegy sung over his tomb, was, in those days, reckoned the greatest misfortune that could befall a man; as his soul could not otherwise be admitted to the *airy hall of his fathers*.

get the king of Erin, in his narrow house? My soul is not lost to Cairbar, the brother of my love. I marked the bright beams of joy, which travelled over his cloudy mind, when I returned, with fame, to Atha of the streams.

Tall they removed, beneath the words of the king; each to his own dark tribe; where, humming, they rolled on the heath, faint-glittering to the stars: like waves, in the rocky bay, before the nightly wind. — Beneath an oak, lay the chief of Atha: his shield, a dusky round, hung high. Near him, against a rock, leaned the stranger *) of Inis-huna: that beam of light, with wandering locks, from Lumon of the roes. — At distance rose the voice of Fonar, with the deeds of the days of old. The song fails, at times, in Lubar's growing roar.

Cro-

*) By the stranger of Inis-huna, is meant Sulmalla, the daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna, the ancient name of that part of South-Britain, which is next to the Irish coast. — She had followed Cathmor in disguise. Her story is related at large in the fourth book.

*) Crothar , begun the bard, first dwelt at
Atha's mossy stream. A thousand **) oaks,
from the mountains , formed his ecchoing hall.
The

*) Crothar was the ancestor of Cathmor, and the
first of his family, who had settled in Atha. It
was in his time, that the first wars were kind-
led between the Fir-bolg and Caël. The pro-
priety of the episode is evident; as the contest,
which originally rose between Crothar and Co-
nar, subsisted afterward between their posterity,
and was the foundation of the story of the
poem.

**) From this circumstance we may learn, that the
art of building with stone was not known in
Ireland so early as the days of Crothar. When
the colony were long settled in the country, the
arts of civil life began to increase among them:
for we find mention made of the *towers of Atha*
in the time of Cathmor, which could not well
be applied to wooden buildings. In Caledonia
they begun very early to build with stone. No-
ne of the houses of Fingal, excepting *Ti-foir-
mal*, were of wood. *Ti-foirmal* was the great
hall, where the bards met to repeat their compo-
sitions annually, before they submitted them to
the judgment of the king in Selma. By some
accident or other, this wooden house happened

The gathering of the people was there, around the feast of the blue-eyed king. — But who, among his chiefs, was like the stately Crothar? Warriors kindled in his presence. The young sigh of the virgins rose. In Alnecma*) was the warrior honoured, the first of the race of Bolga.

He pursued the chace in Ullin: on the moss-covered top of Drumárdo. From the wood looked the daughter of Cathmin, the blue-rolling eye of Con-láma. Her sigh rose in secret. She bent her head, midst her wandering locks. The
moon

to be burnt, and an ancient bard, in the character of Ossian, has left us a curious catalogue of the furniture which it contained. The poem is not just now in my hands, otherwise I would lay here a translation of it before the reader. It has little poetical merit, and evidently bears the marks of a period much later than that wherein Fingal lived.

*) Alnecma, or Alnecmacht, was the ancient name of Connaught. Ullin is still the Irish name of the province of Ulster. To avoid the multiplying of notes, I shall here give the signification of the names in this episode. Drumardo, *high-ridge*. Cathmin, *calm in battle*. Con-lamha, *soft hand*. Turloch, *man of the quiver*. Cormul, *blue eye*.

moon looked in, at night, and saw the white
tossing of her arms: for she thought of the
mighty Crothar, in the season of her dreams.

Three days feasted Crothar with Cathmin.
On the fourth they awaked the hinds. Con-
láma moved to the chace, with all her lovely
steps. She met Crothar in the narrow path.
The bow fell, at once, from her hand. She
turned her face away, and half-hid it with her
locks. — The love of Crothar rose. He
brought the white-bosomed maid to Atha. —
Bards raised the song in her presence; joy dwelt
round the daughter of Ullin.

The pride of Turloch rose, a youth who
loved the white-handed Con-láma. He came,
with battle, to Alnecma; to Atha of the roes.
Cormul went forth to the strife, the brother of
car-borne Crothar. He went forth, but he fell,
and the sigh of his people rose. — Silent
and tall, across the stream, came the darkening
strength of Crothar: he rolled the foe from
Alnecma, and returned, midst the joy of Con-
láma.

Battle on battle comes. Blood is poured
on blood. The tombs of the valiant rise.
Erin's clouds are hung round with ghosts. The

chiefs of the south gathered round the echoing shield of Crothar. He came, with death, to the paths of the foe. The virgins wept, by the streams of Ullin. They looked to the mist of the hill, no hunter descended from its folds. Silence darkened in the land: blasts sighed lonely on grassy tombs.

Descending like the eagle of heaven, with all his rustling wings, when he forsakes the blast with joy, the son of Trenmor came; Conar, arm of death, from Morven of the groves. — He poured his might along green Erin. Death dimly strode behind his sword. The sons of Bolga fled from his course, as from a stream, that bursting from the stormy desert, rolls the fields together, with all their echoing woods. — Crothar *) met him in battle: but Al-
nec-

*) The delicacy of the bard, with regard to Crothar, is remarkable. As he was the ancestor of Cathmor, to whom the episode is addressed, the bard softens his defeat, by only mentioning that his *people fled*. — Cathmor took the song of Conar in an unfavourable light. The bards, being of the order of the Druids, who pretended to a foreknowledge of events, were supposed to have some supernatural prescience of futurity. The
king

necma's warriors fled. The king of Atha slowly retired, in the grief of his soul. He, afterwards, shone in the south: but dim as the sun of Autumn; when he visits, in his robes of mist, Lara of dark streams. The withered grass is covered with dew: the field, tho' bright, is sad.

Why wakes the bard before me, said Cathmor, the memory of those who fled? Has some ghost, from his dusky cloud, bent forward to thine ear; to frighten Cathmor from the field with the tales of old? Dwellers of the folds of night, your voice is but a blast to me; which takes the grey thistle's head, and strews its beard on streams. Within my bosom is a voice; others hear it not. His soul forbids the king of Erin, to shrink back from war.

Abashed

king thought, that the choice of Fonnar's song proceeded, from his foreseeing the unfortunate issue of the war; and that his own fate was shadowed out, in that of his ancestor Crothar. The attitude of the bard, after the reprimand of his patron, is picturesque and affecting. We admire the speech of Cathmor, but lament the effect it has on the feeling soul of the good old poet.

Abashed the bard sinks back in night: re-
tired, he bends above a stream. His thoughts
are on the days of Atha, when Cathmor heard
his song with joy. His tears come rolling down:
the winds are in his beard.

Erin sleeps around. No sleep comes down
on Cathmor's eyes. Dark, in his soul, he saw
the spirit of low-laid Cairbar. He saw him,
without his song, rolled in a blast of night. —
He rose. His steps were round the host. He
struck, at times, his echoing shield. The
sound reached Ossian's ear, on Mora of the
hinds.

Fillan, I said, the foes advance. I hear
the shield of war. Stand thou in the narrow
path. Ossian shall mark their course. If over
my fall the host shall pour; then be thy buck-
ler heard. Awake the king on his heath, lest
his fame should cease.

I strode in all my rattling arms; wide-
bounding over a stream, that darkly-winded, in
the field, before the king of Atha. Green
Atha's king, with lifted spear, came forward
on my course. — Now would we have
mixed in horrid fray, like two contending
ghosts, that bending forward, from two clouds,
send

send forth the roaring winds; did not Ossian behold, on high, the helmet of Erin's kings. The Eagle's wing spread above it, rustling in the breeze. A red star looked thro' the plumes. I stopt the lifted spear.

The helmet of kings is before me! Who art thou, son of night? Shall Ossian's spear be renowned, when thou art lowly-laid? — At once he dropt the gleaming lance. Growing before me seemed the form. He stretched his hand in night; and spoke the words of kings.

Friend of the spirit of heroes, do I meet thee thus in shades? I have wished for thy stately steps in Atha, in the days of feasts. — Why should my spear now arise? The sun must behold us, Ossian; when we bend gleaming, in the strife. Future warriors shall mark the place: and, shuddering, think of other years. They shall mark it, like the haunt of ghosts, pleasant and dreadful to the soul.

And shall it be forgot, I said, where we meet in peace? Is the remembrance of battles always pleasant to the soul? Do not we behold, with joy, the place where our fathers feasted? But our eyes are full of tears, on the field of their wars. — This stone shall rise, with all

its mofs, and ſpeak to other years: “Here Cathmor and Oſſian met! the warriors met in peace!” — When thou, o ſtone, ſhalt fail: and Lubar’s ſtream roll quite away: then ſhall the traveller come, and bend here, perhaps, in reſt. When the darkened moon is rolled over his head, our ſhadowy forms may come, and, mixing with his dreams, remind him of this place. But why turneſt thou ſo dark away, ſon of Borbar-duthul *)?

No forgot, ſon of Fingal, ſhall we aſcend theſe winds. Our deeds are ſtreams of light, before the eyes of bards. But darkneſs is rolled on Atha: the king is low, without his ſong: ſtill there was a beam towards Cathmor from his ſtormy ſoul; like the moon, in a cloud, amidſt the dark-red courſe of thunder.

Son

*) Borbar-duthul, *the ſurly warrior of the dark-brown eyes*. That his name ſuited well with his character, we may eaſily conceive, from the ſtory delivered concerning him, by Maltoſ, toward the end of the ſixth book. He was the brother of that Colculla, who is mentioned in the episode which begins the fourth book.

Son of Erin, I replied, my wrath dwells not in his house *). My hatred flies, on eagle-wing, from the foe that is low. — He shall hear the song of bards; Cairbar shall rejoice on his wind.

Cathmor's swelling soul arose: he took the dagger from his side; and placed it gleaming in my hand. He placed it in my hand, with sighs, and, silent, strode away. — Mine eyes followed his departure. He dimly gleamed, like the form of a ghost, which meets a traveller, by night, on the dark-skirted heath. His words are dark like songs of old: with morning strides the unfinished shade away.

**) Who comes from Lubar's vale? From the folds of the morning-mist? The drops of
heaven

*) The grave, often poetically called a house. This reply of Ossian abounds with the most exalted sentiments of a noble mind. Tho', of all men living, he was the most injured by Cairbar, yet he lays aside his rage, as the *foe was low*. How different is this from the behaviour of the heroes of other ancient poems! — *Cynthius aurem vellit*.

**) The morning of the second day, from the open-
E 5 ing

heaven are on his head. His steps are in the paths of the sad. It is Carril of other times. He comes from Tura's silent cave. I behold it dark in the rock, thro' the thin folds of mist. There, perhaps, Cuchullin sits, on the blast which

ing of the poem, comes on. — After the death of Cuchullin, Carril, the son of Kinfena, his bard, retired to the cave of Tura, which was in the neighbourhood of Moi-lena, the scene of the poem of Temora. His casual appearance here enables Ossian to fulfil immediately the promise he had made to Cathmor, of causing the *funeral song* to be pronounced over the tomb of Cairbar. — The whole of this passage, together with the address of Carril to the fun, is a lyric measure, and was, undoubtedly, intended as a relief to the mind, after the long narrative which preceded it. Tho' the lyric pieces, scattered through the poems of Ossian, are certainly very beautiful in the original, yet they must appear much to disadvantage, stripped of numbers, and the harmony of rhyme. In the recitative or narrative part of the poem, the original is rather a measured sort of prose, than any regular versification; but it has all that variety of cadences, which suit the different ideas, and passions of the speakers. — This book takes up only the space of a few hours.

which bends its trees. Pleasant is the song of the morning from the bard of Erin.

The waves crowd away for fear: they hear the sound of thy coming forth, o sun! — Terrible is thy beauty, son of heaven, when death is folded in thy locks; when thou rollest thy vapors before thee, over the blasted host. But pleasant is thy beam to the hunter, sitting by the rock in a storm, when thou lookest from thy parted cloud, and brightenest his dewy locks; he looks down on the streamy vale, and beholds the descent of roes. — How long shalt thou rise on war, and roll, a bloody shield, thro' heaven? I see the deaths of heroes dark-wandering over thy face! — Why wander the words of Carril? does the son of heaven mourn? he is unstained in his course, ever rejoicing in his fire. — Roll on, thou careless light; thou too, perhaps, must fall. Thy dun robe *) may seize thee, struggling, in thy sky.

Pleasant is the voice of the song, o Carril, to Ossian's soul! It is like the shower of the
morn-

*) By the *dun robe* of the sun, is probably meant an eclipse.

morning, when it comes through the rustling vale, on which the sun looks thro' mist, just rising from his rocks. — But this is no time, o bard, to sit down, at the strife of song. Fingal is in arms on the vale. Thou seest the flaming shield of the king. His face darkens between his locks. He beholds the wide rolling of Erin. —

Does not Carril behold that tomb, beside the roaring stream? Three stones lift their grey heads, beneath a bending oak. A king is lowly laid: give thou his soul to the wind. He is the brother of Cathmor! open his airy hall. — Let thy song be a stream of joy to Cairbar's darkened ghost.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

THE M.C.R.A.

AND

THE P.O.R.A.

BOOK THIRD

ARGUMENT to BOOK III.

Morning coming on, Fingal, after a speech to his people, devolves the command on Gaul, the son of Morni; it being the custom of the times, that the king should not engage, till the necessity of affairs required his superior valour and conduct. — The king and Ossian retire to the rock of Cormul, which overlooked the field of battle. The bards sing the war-song. The general conflict is described. Gaul, the son of Morni, distinguishes himself; kills Tur-lathon, chief of Moruth, and other chiefs of lesser name. — On the other hand, Foldath, who commanded the Irish army (for Cathmor, after the example of Fingal, kept himself from battle) fights gallantly; kills Connal, chief of Dun-lora, and advances to engage Gaul himself. Gaul, in the mean time, being wounded in the hand, by a random arrow, is covered by Fillan, the son of Fingal, who performs prodigies of valour. Night comes on. The horn of Fingal recalls his army. The bards meet them, with a congratulatory song, in which the praises of Gaul

and

ARGUMENT to Book III.

and Fillan are particularly celebrated. The chiefs sit down at a feast; Fingal misses Connal. The episode of Connal and Duthcaron is introduced; which throws further light on the ancient history of Ireland. Caril is dispatched to raise the tomb of Connal. — The action of this book takes up the second day, from the opening of the poem.

TEMO.

T E M O R A:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK THIRD.

*) **W**ho is that, at blue-streaming Lubar;
 by the bending hill of the roes?
 Tall, he leans on an oak torn from high, by
 night-

*) This sudden apostrophe, concerning Fingal, the attitude of the king, and the scenery in which he is placed, tend to elevate the mind to a just conception of the succeeding battle. The speech of Fingal is full of that magnanimous generosity, which distinguishes his character throughout. The groupe of figures, which the poet places around his father, are picturesque, and described with great propriety. The silence of Gaul, the behaviour of Fillan, and the effect which both have on the mind of Fingal, are well imagined. —

F

His

nightly winds. — Who but Comhal's son, brightening in the last of his fields? His grey hair is on the breeze: he half-unfheaths the sword of Luno. His eyes are turned to Moilena, to the dark rolling of foes. — Dost thou hear the voice of the king? It is like the bursting of a stream, in the desert, when it comes between its ecchoing rocks, to the blasted field of the sun.

Wide-skirted comes down the foe! Sons of woody Morven, arise. Be ye like the rocks of my land, on whose brown fides are the rolling of waters. A beam of joy comes on my soul; I see them mighty before me. It is when the foe is feeble, that the sighs of Fingal are heard; lest death should come, without renown, and darkness dwell on his tomb. — Who shall lead the war, against the host of Alnecma? It is, only when danger grows, that my

His speech upon the occasion is very beautiful in the original. Broken and unequal, the numbers represent the agitation of his mind, divided between the admiration excited by the silence of Gaul, (when others boasted of their own actions) and his natural affection for Fillan, which the behaviour of that valiant youth had raised to the highest pitch.

my sword shall shine. — Such was the custom, heretofore, of Trenmor the ruler of winds; and thus descended to battle the blue-shielded Trathal.

The chiefs bend towards the king: each darkly seems to claim the war. They tell, by halves, their mighty deeds: and turn their eyes on Erin. But far before the rest the son of Morni stood: silent he stood, for who had not heard of the battles of Gaul? They rose within his soul. His hand, in secret, seized the sword. The sword which he brought from Strumon, when the strength of Morni failed *).

On

*) Strumon, *stream of the hill*, the name of the seat of the family of Gaul, in the neighbourhood of Selma. During Gaul's expedition to Tromathon, mentioned in the *poem of Oithona*, Morni his father died. Morni ordered the *sword of Strumon*, (which had been preserved, in the family, as a relique, from the days of Colgach, the most renowned of his ancestors) to be laid by his side, in the tomb: at the same time, leaving it in charge to his son, not to take it from thence, till he was reduced to the last extremity. Not long after, two of his brothers

On his spear stood the son of Clatho *)
in the wandering of his locks. Thrice he raised

being slain, in battle, by Coldaronnan, chief
of Clutha, Gaul went to his father's tomb, to
take the sword. His address to the spirit of the
deceased hero, is the only part now remaining
of a poem of Ossian, on the subject. I shall
here lay it before the reader.

G A U L.

“ Breaker of echoing shields, whose head is
deep in shades; hear me from the darkness of
Clora, o son of Colgach, hear!

No rustling, like the eagle's wing, comes over
the course of my streams. Deep-bosomed in the
mist of the desert, o king of Strumon, hear!

Dwellest thou in the shadowy breeze, that pours
its dark wave over the grass? Cease to strew the
beard of the thistle; o chief of Clora, hear!

Or ridest thou on a beam, amidst the dark
trouble of clouds? Pourest thou the loud wind
on seas, to roll their blue waves over isles? hear
me, father of Gaul; amidst thy terrors, hear!

The rustling of eagles is heard, the murmur-
ing oaks shake their heads on the hills: dread-
ful and pleasant is thy approach, friend of the
dwelling of heroes.

M O R N I.

ed his eyes to Fingal: his voice thrice failed him, as he spoke. — Fillan could not boast of

M O R N I.

Who awakes me, in the midst of my cloud,
where my locks of mist spread on the winds?
Mixed with the noise of streams, why rises the
voice of Gaul?

G A U L.

My foes are around me, Morni: their dark
ships descend from their waves. Give the sword
of Strumon, that beam which thou hidest in
thy night.

M O R N I.

Take the sword of resounding Strumon; I look
on thy war, my son; I look, a dim meteor,
from my cloud: blue-shielded Gaul, destroy."

*) Clatho was the daughter of Cathulla, king of Inistore. Fingal, in one of his expeditions to that island, fell in love with Clatho, and took her to wife, after the death of Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac, King of Ireland.

Clatho was the mother of Ryno, Fillan, and Bosmina, mentioned in the *battle of Lora*, one of the lesser poems printed in Vol. I. Fillan

of battles; at once he strode away. Bent over a distant stream he stood: the tear hung in his eye. He struck, at times, the thistle's head, with his inverted spear.

Nor is he unseen of Fingal. Sidelong he beheld his son. He beheld him, with bursting joy; and turned, amidst his crowded soul. In silence turned the king towards Mora of woods. He hid the big tear with his locks. — At length his voice is heard.

*) First of the sons of Morni; thou rock that defiest the storm! Lead thou my battle, for the race of low-laid Cormac. No boy's staff

is often called the son of Clatho, to distinguish him from those sons which Fingal had by Roscrana.

*) Gaul, the son of Morni, next to Fingal, is the most renowned character introduced by Ossian in his poems. He is, like Ajax in the Iliad, distinguished by his manly taciturnity. The honourable epithets bestowed on him here, by Fingal, are amazingly expressive in the original. There is not a passage in all Temora, which loses so much in translation, as this. The first part of the speech is rapid and irregular, and is peculiarly calculated to animate the soul to war

staff is thy spear: no harmless beam of light
 thy sword. Son of Morni of steeds, behold the
 foe; destroy. — Fillan, observe the chief:
 he is not calm in strife: nor burns he, heedless,
 in battle; my son, observe the king. He is
 strong as Lubar's stream, but never foams and
 roars. High on cloudy Mora, Fingal shall be-
 hold the war. Stand, Ossian *), near thy fa-
 ther, by the falling stream. — Raise the
 voice, o bards; Morven, move beneath the
 sound. It is my latter field; clothe it over with
 light.

As the sudden rising of winds; or distant
 rolling of troubled seas, when some dark ghost,
 in wrath, heaves the billows over an isle, the
 feat

war. — Where the king addresses Fillan, the
 versification changes to a regular and smooth
 measure. The first is like torrents rushing over
 broken rocks; the second like the course of a
 full-flowing river, calm but majestic. This in-
 stance serves to shew, how much it assists a poet,
 to alter the measure, according to the particu-
 lar passion, that he intends to excite in his read-
 er.

*) Ullin being sent to Morven with the body of Oscar,
 Ossian attends his father, in quality of chief bard.

feat of mist, on the deep, for many dark-brown years: so terrible is the sound of the host, wide-moving over the field. Gaul is tall before them: the streams glitter within his strides. The bards raised the song by his side; he struck his shield between. On the skirts of the blast, the tuneful voices rose.

On Crona, said the bards, there bursts a stream by night. It swells, in its own dark course, till morning's early beam. Then comes it white from the hill, with the rocks and their hundred groves. Far be my steps from Crona: Death is tumbling there. Be ye a stream from Mora, sons of cloudy Morven.

Who rises, from his car, on Clutha? The hills are troubled before the king! The dark woods eccho round, and lighten at his steel. See him, amidst the foe, like Colgach's *) sportful ghost; when he scatters the clouds, and

*) There are some traditions, but, I believe, of late invention, that this Colgach was the same with the Galgacus of Tacitus. He was the ancestor of Gaul, the son of Morni, and appears, from some, really ancient, traditions, to have been king,

and rides the eddying wings! It is Morni *)
of the bounding steeds! Be like thy father,
Gaul!

Selma

king, or Vergobret, of the Caledonians; and hence proceeded the pretensions of the family of Morni to the throne, which created a good deal of disturbance, both to Comhal and his son Fingal. The first was killed in battle by that tribe; and it was after Fingal was grown up, that they were reduced to obedience. Colgach signifies *fiercely-looking*; which is a very proper name for a warrior, and is probably the origin of Calgacus; tho' I believe it a matter of mere conjecture, that the Colgach here mentioned was the same with that hero. — I cannot help observing, with how much propriety the song of the bards is conducted. Gaul, whose experience might have rendered his conduct cautious in war, has the example of his father, just rushing to battle, set before his eyes. Fillan, on the other hand, whose youth might make him impetuous and unguarded in action, is put in mind of the sedate and serene behaviour of Fingal upon like occasions.

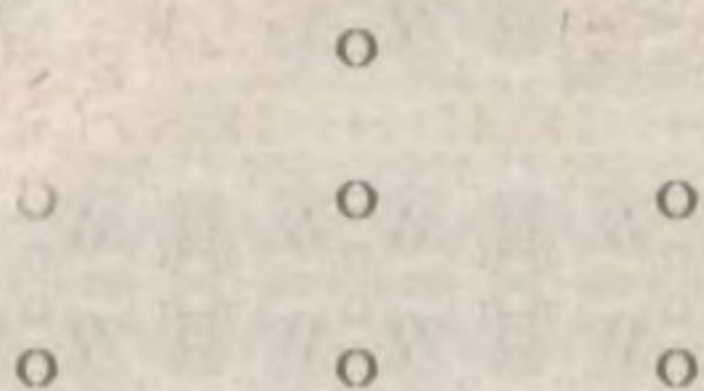
*) The expedition of Morni to Clutha, alluded to here, is handed down in tradition. The poem, on which the tradition was founded, is now lost.

*) Selma is opened wide. Bards take the trembling harps. Ten youths carry the oak of the feast. A distant sun-beam marks the hill. The dusky waves of the blast fly over the fields of grafs. — Why art thou so silent, Morven? — The king returns with all his fame. Did not the battle roar; yet peaceful is his brow? It roared, and Fingal overcame. — Be like thy father, Fillan.

They moved beneath the song. — High waved their arms, as rushy fields, beneath autumnal winds. On Mora stood the king in arms. Mist flies round his buckler broad; as, aloft, it hung on a bough, on Cormul's mossy rock. — In silence I stood by Fingal, and turned my eyes on Cromla's **) wood: lest I should behold the host, and rush amidst my swelling

*) Ossian is peculiarly happy, in his descriptions of still life; and these acquire double force, by his placing them near busy and tumultuous scenes. This antithesis serves to animate and heighten the features of poetry.

**) The mountain Cromla was in the neighbourhood of the scene of this poem; which was nearly the same with that of Fingal.



swelling soul. My foot is forward on the heath. I glittered, tall, in steel: like the falling stream of Tromo, which nightly winds bind over with ice. — The boy sees it, on high, gleaming to the early beam: towards it he turns his ear, and wonders why it is so silent.

Nor bent over a stream is Cathmor, like a youth in a peaceful field: wide he drew forward the war, a dark and troubled wave. — But when he beheld Fingal on Mora; his generous pride arose. “Shall the chief of Atha, fight, and no king in the field? Foldath, lead my people forth. Thou art a beam of fire.”

Forth-issued the chief of Moma, like a cloud, the robe of ghosts. He drew his sword, a flame, from his side; and bade the battle move. — The tribes, like ridgy waves, dark pour their strength around. Haughty is his stride before them: his red eye rolls in wrath. — He called the chief of Dunratho *); and his words were heard.

Cormul,

*) Dun-ratho, *a hill, with a plain on its top*. Cormul, *blue eye*. Foldath dispatches here Cormul, to lie in ambush behind the army of the Caledoni-

Cormul, thou beholdest that path. It winds green behind the foe. Place thy people there; lest Morven should escape from my sword. — Bards of green-valleyed Erin, let no voice of yours arise. The sons of Morven must fall without song. They are the foes of Cairbar. Hereafter shall the traveller meet their dark, thick mist, on Lena, where it wanders, with their ghosts, beside the reedy lake. Never shall they rise, without song, to the dwelling of winds.

Cormul darkened, as he went: behind him rushed his tribe. They sunk beyond the rock: Gaul spoke to Fillan of Moruth; as his eye pursued the course of the dark-eyed king of Dunratho.

Thou beholdest the steps of Cormul; let thine arm be strong. When he is low, son of Fingal,

donians. This speech suits well with the character of Foldath, which is, throughout, haughty and presumptuous. Towards the latter end of this speech, we find the opinion of the times, concerning the unhappiness of the souls of those who were buried without the funeral song. This doctrine, no doubt, was inculcated by the bards, to make their order respectable and necessary.

Fingal, remember Gaul in war. Here I fall forward into battle, amidst the ridge of shields.

The sign of death arose; the dreadful sound of Morni's shield. Gaul poured his voice between. Fingal rose, high on Mora. He saw them, from wing to wing, bending in the strife. Gleaming, on his own dark hill, the strength *) of Atha stood. — They **) were like two spirits of heaven, standing each on his gloomy cloud; when they pour abroad the winds, and lift the roaring seas. The blue-tumbling of waves is before them, marked with the paths of whales. Themselves are calm and bright; and the gale lifts their locks of mist.

What beam of light hangs high in air? It is Morni's dreadful sword. — Death is strewed on thy paths, o Gaul; thou foldest them together in thy rage. — Like a young oak falls Turlathon ***) , with his branches round

*) By the *strength of Atha*, is meant Cathmor. The expression is common in Homer, and other ancient poets.

**) The two kings.

***) Tur-lathon, *broad trunk of a tree*. Móruth, *great stream*. Oichaoma, *mild maid*. Dun-lora, *the hill of the noisy stream*. Duth-caron, *dark-brown man*.

round him. His high-bosomed spouse stretches her white arms, in dreams, to the returning king, as she sleeps by gurgling Moruth, in her disordered locks. It is his ghost, Oichoma; the chief is lowly laid. Harken not to the winds, for Turlathon's echoing shield. It is pierced, by his streams, and its sound is past away.

Not peaceful is the hand of Foldath: he winds his course in blood. Connal met him in fight; they mixed their clanging steel. — Why should mine eyes behold them! Connal, thy locks are grey. — Thou wert the friend of strangers, at the moss-covered rock of Dunlora. When the skies were rolled together: then thy feast was spread. The stranger heard the winds without; and rejoiced at thy burning oak. — Why, son of Duth-caron, art thou laid in blood! The blasted tree bends above thee: thy shield lies broken near. Thy blood mixes with the stream; thou breaker of the shields!

*) I took the spear, in my wrath: but Gaul rushed forward on the foe. The feeble pass by his side; his rage is turned on Mo-
ma's

*) The poet speaks in his own person.

ma's chief. Now they had raised their deathful spears: unseen an arrow came. It pierced the hand of Gaul; his steel fell sounding to earth. — Young Fillan came *), with Cormul's shield, and stretched it large before the king. Foldath sent his shout abroad, and kindled all the field: as a blast, that lifts the broad-winged flame, over Lumon's**) ecchoing groves.

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, said Gaul, thou art a beam from heaven; that coming on the troubled deep, binds up the tempest's wing. — Cormul is fallen before thee. Early art thou in the fame of thy fathers. — Rush not too far, my hero, I cannot lift the spear to aid. I stand harmless in battle: but my voice shall

*) Fillan had been dispatched by Gaul, to oppose Cormul, who had been sent by Foldath, to lie in ambush behind the Caledonian army. It appears that Fillan had killed Cormul, otherwise he could not be supposed to have possessed himself of the shield of that chief. The poet being intent upon the main action, passes over slightly this feat of Fillan.

**) Lumon, *bending hill*; a mountain in Inis-huna, or that part of South-Britain, which is over-against the Irish coast.

shall be poured abroad. — The sons of Morven shall hear, and remember my former deeds.

His terrible voice rose on the wind; the host bend forward in the fight. Often had they heard him, at Strumon, when he called them to the chace of the hinds. — Himself stood tall, amidst the war, as an oak in the skirts of a storm, which now is clothed, on high, in mist: then shews its broad, waving head; the musing hunter lifts his eye from his own rushy field.

My soul pursues thee, o Fillan, thro' the path of thy fame. Thou rolledst the foe before thee. — Now Foldath, perhaps, would fly: but night came down with its clouds; and Cathmor's horn was heard. The sons of Morven heard the voice of Fingal, from Mora's gathered mist. The bards poured their song, like dew, on the returning war.

Who comes from Strumon, they said, amidst her wandering locks? She is mournful in her steps, and lifts her blue eyes towards Erin. Why art thou sad, Evir-choma *)?

Who

*) Evir-choama, *mild and stately maid*, the wife of Gaul. She was the daughter of Casdu-conglas, chief of I-dronlo, one of the Hebrides.

Who is like thy chief in renown? He descended dreadful to battle; he returns, like a light from a cloud. He lifted the sword in wrath: they shrunk before blue-shielded Gaul!

Joy, like the rustling gale, comes on the soul of the king. He remembers the battles of old; the days, wherein his fathers fought. The days of old return on Fingal's mind, as he beholds the renown of his son. As the sun rejoices, from his cloud, over the tree his beams have raised, as it shakes its lonely head on the heath: so joyful is the king over Fillan.

As the rolling of thunder on hills, when Lara's fields are still and dark, such are the steps of Morven pleasant and dreadful to the ear. They return with their sound, like eagles to their dark-browed rock, after the prey is torn on the field, the dun sons of the bounding hind. Your fathers rejoice from their clouds, sons of streamy Cona.

Such was the nightly voice of bards, on Mora of the hinds. A flame rose, from an hundred oaks, which winds had torn from Cor-mul's steep. The feast is spread in the midst: around sat the gleaming chiefs. Fingal is there

in his strength; the eagle-wing *) of his helmet sounds: the rustling blasts of the west unequal rushed thro' night. Long looked the king in silence round: at length, his words were heard.

My soul feels a want in our joy. I behold a breach among my friends. — The head of one tree is low: the squally wind pours in on Selma. — Where is the chief of Dunlora? Ought he to be forgot at the feast? When did he forget the stranger, in the midst of his echoing hall? — Ye are silent in my presence! — Connal is then no more. — Joy meet thee, o warrior, like a stream of light. Swift be thy course to thy fathers, in the folds of the mountain-winds. — Ossian, thy soul is fire: kindle the memory of the king. Awake the battles of Connal, when first he shone in war. The locks of Connal were grey; his

*) From this, and several other passages, in this poem, it appears, that the kings of Morven and Ireland had a plume of eagle's feathers, by way of ornament, in their helmets. It was from this distinguished mark that Ossian knew Cathmor, in the second book; which custom, probably, he had borrowed, from the former monarchs of Ireland, of the race of the Caël or Caledonians.

his days of youth *) were mixed with mine.
In one day Duth - caron first strung our bows,
against the roes of Dun-lora.

Many, I said, are our paths to battle, in
green-hilled Inisfail. Often did our sails arise,
over the blue-tumbling waters; when we came,
in other days, to aid the race of Conar.

The strife roared once in Alnecma, at the
foam-covered streams of Duth - úla **). With
Cor-

*) After the death of Comhal, and during the usurpation of the tribe of Morni, Fingal was educated in private by Duth - caron. It was then he contracted that intimacy with Connal the son of Duth - caron, which occasions his regretting so much his fall. When Fingal was grown up, he soon reduced the tribe of Morni; and, as it appears from the subsequent episode, sent Duth - caron and his son Connal to the aid of Cormac, the son of Conar, king of Ireland, who was driven to the last extremity, by the insurrections of the Firbolg. This episode throws farther light on the contests between the Caél and Firbolg; and is the more valuable upon that account.

**) Duth - úla, a river in Connaught; it signifies,
dark-rushing water.

G 2

Staats-
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Cormac descended to battle Duth-caron from cloudy Morven. Nor descended Duth-caron alone, his son was by his side, the long-haired youth of Connal, lifting the first of his spears. Thou didst command them, o Fingal, to aid the king of Erin.

Like the bursting strength of a stream, the sons of Bolga rushed to war: Colc-ulla *) was before them, the chief of blue-streaming Atha. The battle was mixed on the plain, like the meeting of two stormy seas. Cormac **) shone in

*) Colc-ulla, *firm look in readiness*; he was the brother of Borbar-duthul, the father of Cairbar and Cathmor, who after the death of Cormac, the son of Artho, successively mounted.

**) Cormac, the son of Conar, the second king of Ireland, of the race of the Caledonians. This insurrection of the Firbolg happened towards the latter end of the long reign of Cormac. From several episodes and poems, it appears, that he never possessed the Irish throne peaceably. — The party of the family of Atha had made several attempts to overturn the succession in the race of Conar, before they effected it, in the minority of Cormac, the son of Artho. — Ireland, from

in his own strife, bright as the forms of his fathers. But, far before the rest, Duth-caron hewed down the foe. Nor slept the arm of Connal, by his father's side. Atha prevailed on the plain: like scattered mist, fled the people of Ullin *).

Then

from the most ancient accounts concerning it, seems to have been always so disturbed by domestic commotions, that it is difficult to say, whether it ever was, for any length of time, subject to one monarch. It is certain, that every province, if not every small district, had its own king. One of those petty princes assumed, at times, the title of king of Ireland, and, on account of his superior force, or in cases of public danger, was acknowledged by the rest as such: but the succession, from father to son, does not appear to have been established. — It was the divisions amongst themselves, arising from the bad constitution of their government, that, at last, subjected the Irish to a foreign yoke.

*) The inhabitants of Ullin or Ulster, who were of the race of the Caledonians, seem, alone to have been the firm friends to the succession in the family of Conar. The Firbolg were only subject to them by constraint, and embraced every opportunity to throw off their yoke.

Then rose the sword of Duth-caron, and the steel of broad-shielded Connal. They shaded their flying friends, like two rocks with their heads of pine. — Night came down on Duth-ula: silent strode the chiefs over the field. A mountain-stream roared across the path, nor could Duth-caron bound over its course. — Why stands my father? said Connal. — I hear the rushing foe.

Fly, Connal, he said; thy father's strength begins to fail. — I come wounded from battle; here let me rest in night. — "But thou shalt not remain alone, said Connal's bursting sigh. My shield is an eagle's wing to cover the king of Dun-lora." He bends dark above the chief: the mighty Duth-caron dies.

Day rose, and night returned. No lonely bard appeared, deep-musing on the heath; and could Connal leave the tomb of his father, till he should receive his fame? — He bent the bow against the roes of Duth-ula; he spread the lonely feast. — Seven nights he laid his head on the tomb, and saw his father in his dreams. He saw him rolled dark, in a blast, like the vapour of reedy Lego. — At length
the

the steps of Colgan *) came, the bard of high Temora. Duth-caron received his fame, and brightened, as he rose on the wind.

Pleasant

*) Colgan, the son of Cathmul, was the principal bard of Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland. Part of an old poem, on the loves of Fingal and Ros-crána, is still preserved, and goes under the name of this Colgan: but whether it is of his composition, or the production of a latter age, I shall not pretend to determine. Be that as it will, it appears, from the obsolete phrases which it contains, to be very ancient; and its poetical merit may perhaps excuse me, for laying a translation of it before the reader. What remains of the poem, is a dialogue in a lyric measure, between Fingal and Ros-crána, the daughter of Cormac. She begins with a soliloquy, which is overheard by Fingal.

ROS-CRANA.

“By night, came a dream to Ros-crána! I feel my beating soul. No vision of the forms of the death, came to the blue eyes of Erin. But, rising from the wave of the north, I beheld him bright in his locks. I beheld the son of the king. My beating soul is high. I laid my head down

Pleasant to the ear, said Fingal, is the
praise of the kings of men; when their bows
are

in night; again ascended the form. Why delay-
est thou thy coming, young rider of streamy
waves?

But, there, far-distant, he comes; where seas
roll their green ridges in mist! Young dweller of
my soul; why dost thou delay? —————

F I N G A L.

It was the soft voice of Moi-lena! the pleas-
ant breeze of the valley of roes! But why dost
thou hide thee in shades? Young love of heroes,
rise! — Are not thy steps covered with light?
In thy groves thou appearest, Ros-crana, like
the sun in the gathering of clouds. Why dost
thou hide thee in shades? Young love of heroes,
rise!

R O S - C R A N A.

My fluttering soul is high! — Let me turn
from the steps of the king. He has heard my
secret voice: and shall my blue eyes roll, in his
presence? — Roe of the hill of moss, toward
thy dwelling I move. Meet me, ye breezes of
Mora, as I move thro' the valley of winds. —
But why should he ascend his ocean? — Son
of

are strong in battle; when they soften at the
sight of the sad. — Thus let my name be
renown-

of heroes, my soul is thine! — My steps shall
not move to the desert: the light of Ros-crana
is here.

FINGAL.

It was the light tread of a ghost, the fair
dweller of eddying winds. Why deceivest thou
me, with thy voice? Here let me rest in sha-
des. — Shouldst thou stretch thy white arm,
from thy grove, thou sun-beam of Cormac of
Erin!

ROS-CRANA.

He is gone! and my blue eyes are dim; faint-
rolling, in all my tears. But, there, I be-
hold him, alone; king of Morven, my soul is
thine. Ah me! what clanging of armour! —
Colc-ulla of Atha is near! " —

Fingal, as we learn from the episode, with
which the fourth book begins, undertook an ex-
pedition into Ireland, to aid Cormac Mac-conar
against the insurrections of the Fir-bolg. It was
then he saw, fell in love with, and married Ros-
crana, the daughter of Cormac. — Some tra-
ditions give this poem to Ossian; but, from se-

renowned, when bards shall lighten my rising soul. Carril, son of Kinfena; take the bards, and raise a tomb. To night let Connal dwell within his narrow house: let not the soul of the valiant wander on the winds. — Faint glimmers the moon on Moi-lena, thro' the broad-headed groves of the hill: raise stones, beneath its beams, to all the fallen in war. — Tho' no chiefs were they, yet their hands were strong in fight. They were my rock in danger; the mountain, from which I spread my eagle-wings. Thence am I renowned; Carril, forget not the low.

Loud, at once, from the hundred bards, rose the song of the tomb. Carril strode before them, they are the murmur of streams behind him. Silence dwells in the vales of Moi-lena,

veral circumstances, I conclude it to be an imitation, but a very happy one, of the manner of that poet. — The elegance of the sentiment, and beauty of the imagery, however, refer the composition of it to an æra of remote antiquity: for, the nearer we approach to our own times, the less beautiful are the compositions of the bards.

lena, where each, with its own dark stream, is winding between the hills. I heard the voice of the bards, lessening, as they moved along. I leaned forward from my shield; and felt the kindling of my soul. Half-formed the words of my song, burst forth upon the wind. So hears a tree, on the vale, the voice of spring around: it pours its green leaves to the sun, and shakes its lonely head. The hum of the mountain-bee is near it; the hunter sees it, with joy, from the blasted heath.

Young Fillan, at a distance stood. His helmet lay glittering on the ground. His dark hair is loose to the blast: a beam of light is Clatho's son. He heard the words of the king, with joy; and leaned forward on his spear.

My son, said car-borne Fingal; I saw thy deeds, and my soul was glad. The fame of our fathers, I said, bursts from its gathered cloud. — Thou art brave, son of Clatho; but headlong in the strife. So did not Fingal advance, tho' he never feared a foe. — Let thy people be a ridge behind; they are thy strength in the field. — Then shalt thou be long renowned, and behold the tombs of thy fathers.

fathers. The memory of the past returns, my
deeds in other years : when first I descended
from ocean on the green-valleyed isle. —
We bend towards the voice of the king. The
moon looks abroad from her cloud. The grey-
skirted mist is near, the dwelling of the ghosts.

TEMO.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FOURTH.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK IV.

The second night continues. Fingal relates, at the feast, his own first expedition into Ireland, and his marriage with Ros-crána, the daughter of Corinac, king of that island. — The Irish chiefs convene in the presence of Cathmor. The situation of the king described. The story of Sul-malla, the daughter of Connor, king of Inis-huna, who, in the disguise of a young warrior, had followed Cathmor to the war. The sullen behaviour of Foldath, who had commanded in the battle of the preceding day, renews the difference between him and Malthos: but Cathmor, interposing, ends it. The chiefs feast, and hear the song of Fonar the bard. Cathmor returns to rest, at a distance from the army. The ghost of his brother Cairbar appears to him in a dream; and obscurely foretels the issue of the war. — The soliloquy of the king. He discovers Sul-malla. Morning comes. Her soliloquy closes the book.

TEMMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FOURTH.

*) **B**eneath an oak, said the king, I sat on
Selma's streamy rock, when Connal
rose, from the sea, with the broken spear of
Duth-caron. Far-distant stood the youth, and
turned

*) This episode has an immediate connection with the story of Connal and Duth-caron, in the latter end of the third book. Fingal, sitting beneath an oak, near the palace of Selma, discovers Connal just landing from Ireland. The danger which threatened Cormac king of Ireland, induces him to sail immediately to that island. — The story is introduced, by the king, as a pattern for the future behaviour of Fillan, whose rashness in the preceding battle is reprimanded.

turned away his eyes : for he remembered the steps of his father , on his own green hills. I darkened in my place : dusky thoughts rolled over my soul. The kings of Erin rose before me. I half-unsheathed my sword. — Slowly approached the chiefs ; they lifted up their silent eyes. Like a ridge of clouds , they wait for the bursting-forth of my voice : it was to them , a wind from heaven , to roll the mist away.

I bade my white sails to rise , before the roar of Cona's wind. Three hundred youths looked , from their waves , on Fingal's bossy shield. High on the mast it hung , and marked the dark-blue sea. — But when the night came down , I struck , at times , the warning boss : I struck , and looked on high , for fiery-haired Ul-erin *).

Nor wanting was the star of heaven : it travelled red between the clouds : I pursued the love-

*) Ul-erin , *the guide to Ireland* , a star known by that name in the days of Fingal , and very useful to those who sailed , by night , from the Hebrides , or Caledonia , to the coast of Ulster. We find , from this passage , that navigation was considerably advanced , at this time , among the Caledonians.

lovely beam on the faint-gleaming deep. —
 With morning, Erin rose in mist. We came
 into the bay of Moi-lena, where its blue wa-
 ters tumbled, in the bosom of ecchoing woods.
 — Here Cormac, in his secret hall, avoided
 the strength of Colculla. Nor he alone avoids
 the foe: the blue eye of Ros-crana *), white-
 handed maid, the daughter of the king.

Grey, on his pointless spear, came forth
 the aged steps of Cormac. He smiled, from
 his waving locks: but grief was in his soul.
 He saw us few before him, and his sigh aro-
 se. — I see the arms of Trenmor, he said;
 and these are the steps of the king! Fingal!
 thou

*) Ros-crána, *the beam of the rising sun*; she was
 the mother of Ossian. The Irish bards relate
 strange fictions concerning this princess. The
 character given of her here, and in other poems
 of Ossian, does not tally with their accounts.
 Their stories, however, concerning Fingal, if
 they mean him by *Fion Mac-Comhal*, are so in-
 consistent and notoriously fabulous, that they do
 not deserve to be mentioned; for they evidently
 bear, along with them, the marks of late inven-
 tion.

thou art a beam of light to Cormac's darkened soul. — Early is thy fame, my son: but strong are the foes of Erin. They are like the roar of streams in the land, son of ear-borne Comhal.

Yet they may be rolled *) away, I said in my rising soul. We are not of the race of the feeble, king of blue-shielded hosts. Why should fear come amongst us, like a ghost of night? The soul of the valiant grows, as foes increase in the field. Roll no darkness, king of Erin, on the young in war.

The bursting tears of the king came down. He seized my hand in silence. — “Race of the daring Trenmor, I roll no cloud before thee. Thou burnest in the fire of thy fathers. I behold thy fame. It marks thy course in battles, like a stream of light. — But wait the coming of Cairbar **): my son must join thy

*) Cormac had said, that his foes were *like the roar of streams*, and Fingal continues the metaphor. The speech of the young hero is spirited, and consistent with that sedate intrepidity, which eminently distinguishes his character throughout.

**) Cairbar, the son of Cormac, was afterwards king of Ireland. His reign was short. He was succeeded

thy sword. He calls the sons of Ullin, from
all their distant streams."

We came to the hall of the king, where
it rose in the midst of rocks: rocks, on whose
dark sides, were the marks of streams of old.
Broad oaks bend around with their moss: the
thick birch waves its green head. Half-hid,
in her shady grove, Ros-crana raised the song.
Her white hands rose on the harp. I beheld
her blue-rolling eyes. She was like a spirit*)
of heaven, half-folded in the skirt of a cloud.

Three

ceeded by his son Artho, the father of that Cor-
mac, who was murdered by Cairbar the son of
Borbar-duthul. — Cairbar, the son of Cor-
mac, long after his son Artho was grown to man's
estate, had, by his wife Beltanno, another son,
whose name was Ferad-artho. — He was the
only one remaining of the race of Conar the first
king of Ireland, when Fingal's expedition against
Cairbar the son of Borbar-duthul happened. See
more of Ferad-artho in the eighth book.

*) The attitude of Ros-crana is aptly illustrated by
this simile; for the ideas of those times, concern-
ing the spirits of the deceased, were not so gloo-

Three days we feasted at Moi-lena: she rose bright amidst my troubled soul. — Cormac beheld me dark. He gave the white-bosomed maid.

my and disagreeable, as those of succeeding ages. The spirits of women, it was supposed, retained that beauty, which they possessed while living, and transported themselves, from place to place, with that gliding motion, which Homer ascribes to the gods. The descriptions, which poets, less antient than Ossian, have left us of those beautiful figures, that appeared sometimes on the hills, are elegant and picturesque. They compare them to the *rain-bow on streams*: or, *the gliding of sun-beams on the hills*. I shall here translate a passage of an old song, where both these beautiful images are mentioned together.

A chief who lived three centuries ago, returning from the war, understood that his wife or mistress was dead. The bard introduces him speaking the following soliloquy, when he came, within sight of the place, where he had left her, at his departure.

“My soul darkens in sorrow. I behold not the smoak of my hall. No grey dog bounds at my streams. Silence dwells in the valley of trees.

“Is

maid. — She came with bending eye,
amidst the wandering of her heavy locks. —
She came. — Straight the battle roared. —
Colc-ulla rushed; — I seized my spear.
My sword rose, with my people, against the
ridgy foe. Alnecma fled. Colc-ulla fell. Fin-
gal returned with fame.

He is renowned, o Fillan, who fights, in
the strength of his people. The bard pursues
his steps, thro' the land of the foe. — But
he who fights alone; few are his deeds to other
times. He shines, to-day, a mighty light.
To-morrow, he is low. One song contains
his

“Is that a rain-bow on Crunath? It flies; —
and the sky is dark. Again, thou movest, bright,
on the heath, thou sun-beam cloathed in a
shower! — Hah! it is she, my love: her glid-
ing course on the bosom of winds!

In succeeding times the beauty of Ros-crana
passed into a proverb; and the highest compli-
ment, that could be paid to a woman, was to
compare her person with *the daughter of Cormac*,

'S tu fein an Ros-crána.

Siol Chormac na n'íoma lán.

his fame. His name is on one dark field.
He is forgot, but where his tomb sends forth
the tufts of grafs.

Such were the words of Fingal, on Mora
of the roes. Three bards, from the rock of
Cormul, poured down the pleasant song. Sleep
descended, in the foud, on the broad-skirted
hoft. Carril returned, with the bards, from
the tomb of Dun-lora's king. The voice of
morning fhall not come, to the dusky bed of
the hero. No more fhalt thou hear the tread
of roes, around thy narrow houfe.

*) As roll the troubled clouds, round a
meteor of night, when they brighten their fi-
des, with its light, along the heaving fea: fo
gathered Erin, around the gleaming form of
Atha's

*) The poet changes the fcene to the Irifh camp.
The images introduced here are magnificent, and
have that fort of *terrible beauty*, if I may ufe
the expreffion, which occurs fo frequently in the
compositions of Offian. The troubled motion of
the army, and the fedate and carelefs attitude
of Cathmor, form a contrast, which, as I have
before remarked, heightens the features of de-
fcription, and is calculated to enliven poetry.

Atha's king. He, tall in the midst, careless
lifts, at times, his spear: as swells or falls the
found of Fonar's distant harp.

*) Near him leaned, against a rock, Sul-
malla

*) In order to illustrate this passage, I shall give
here the history, on which it is founded, as I
have gathered it from other poems. The nation
of the Firbolg, who inhabited the south of Ire-
land, being originally descended from the Belgæ,
who possessed the south and south-west coast of
Britain, kept up, for many ages, an amicable
correspondence with their mother-country; and
sent aid to the British Belgæ, when they were
pressed by the Romans or other new-comers from
the continent. Con-mor, king of Inis-huna,
(that part of South-Britain which is over-
against the Irish coast) being attacked, by what
enemy is not mentioned, sent for aid to Cair-
bar, lord of Atha, the most potent chief of the
Firbolg. Cairbar dispatched his brother Cathmor
to the assistance of Conmor. Cathmor, after
various vicissitudes of fortune, put an end to the
war, by the total defeat of the enemies of Inis-
huna, and returned in triumph to the residence
of Con-mor. There, at a feast, Sul-malla,

ma **)* of blue eyes, the white-bosomed daughter of Conmor king of Inis-huna. To his aid came blue-shielded Cathmor, and rolled his foes away. Sul-malla beheld him statelily in the hall of feasts; nor careless rolled the eyes of Cathmor on the long-haired maid.

The third day arose, and Fithil ***)* came from Erin of the streams. He told of the lifting

the daughter of Con-mor, fell desperately in love with Cathmor, who, before her passion was disclosed, was recalled to Ireland by his brother Cairbar, upon the news of the intended expedition of Fingal, to re-establish the family of Conar on the Irish throne. — The wind being contrary, Cathmor remained, for three days, in a neighbouring bay; during which time Sul-malla disguised herself, in the habit of a young warrior, and came to offer him her service, in the war. Cathmor accepted of the proposal, sailed for Ireland, and arrived in Ulster, a few days before the death of Cairbar.

**)* Sul-malla, *slowly rolling eyes.* Coan-mór, *mild and tall.* Inis-huna, *green island.*

***) Fithil, an inferior bard.* It may either be taken here for the proper name of a man, or in the
literal

lifting up of the shield *) on Morven, and the danger of red-haired Cairbar. Cathmor raised the sail at Cluba; but the winds were in other lands.

literal sense, as the bards were the heralds and messengers of those times. Cathmor, it is probable, was absent, when the rebellion of his brother Cairbar, and the assassination of Cormac, king of Ireland, happened. The traditions, which are handed down with the poem, say that Cathmor and his followers had only arrived, from Inis-huna, three days before the death of Cairbar, which sufficiently clears his character from any imputation of being concerned in the conspiracy, with his brother.

*) The ceremony which was used by Fingal, when he prepared for an expedition, is related, by Ossian, in one of his lesser poems. A bard, at midnight, went to the hall, where the tribes feasted upon solemn occasions, raised the war-song, and thrice called the spirits of their deceased ancestors, to come, *on their clouds*, to behold the actions of their children. He then fixed the shield of Trenmor, on a tree on the rock of Selma, striking it, at times, with the blunt end of a spear, and singing the war-song between. Thus he did, for three successive nights, and in the

lands. Three days he remained on the coast, and turned his eyes on Conmor's halls. — He remembered the daughter of strangers, and his sigh arose. — Now when the winds awaked the wave: from the hill came a youth in arms; to lift the sword with Cathmor in his echoing field. — It was the white-armed Sul-malla: secret she dwelt beneath her helmet. Her steps were in the path of the king; on him her blue eyes rolled with joy, when he lay by his roaring streams. — But Cathmor thought, that, on Lumon, she still pursued the roes: or far, on a rock, stretched her white hand to the wind; to feel its course from Inis-fail, the green dwelling of her love. He had promised to return, with his white-bosomed sails. — The maid is near thee, king of Atha, leaning on her rock.

The

mean time, messengers were dispatched to convene the tribes; or, as Ossian expresses it, *to call them from all their streams*. This phrase alludes to the situation of the residences of the clans, which were generally fixed in valleys, where the torrents of the neighbouring mountains were collected into one body, and became *large streams* or rivers. — *The lifting up of the shield*, was the phrase for beginning a war.

The tall forms of the chiefs stood around: all but dark-browed Foldath *). He stood beneath a distant tree, rolled into his haughty soul. His bushy hair whistles in wind. At times, bursts the hum of a song. — He struck the tree, at length, in wrath; and rushed before the king.

Calm and stately, to the beam of the oak, arose the form of young Hidalla. His hair falls round his blushing cheek, in wreaths of waving light. Soft was his voice in Clon-ra **), in the valley of his fathers; when he touched the harp, in the hall, near his roaring streams.

King

*) The surly attitude of Foldath, is a proper preamble to his after behaviour. Chaffed with the disappointment of the victory, which he promised himself, he becomes passionate and over-bearing. The quarrel, which succeeds between him and Malthos, was, no doubt, introduced by the poet, to raise the character of Cathmor, whose superior worth shines forth, in his manly manner of ending the difference between the chiefs.

**) Claon-rath, *winding field*. The *th* are seldom pronounced audibly in the Galic language.

King of Erin, said the youth, now is the time of feasts. Bid the voice of bards arise, and roll the night away. The soul returns, from song, more terrible to war. — Darkness settles on Inis-fail: from hill to hill bend the skirted clouds. Far and grey, on the heath, the dreadful strides of ghosts are seen: the ghosts of those who fell, bend forward to their song. — Bid thou the harps to rise, and brighten the dead, on their wandering blasts.

Be all the dead forgot, said Foldath's bursting wrath. Did not I fail in the field, and shall I hear the song? Yet was not my course harmless in battle: blood was a stream around my steps. But the feeble were behind me, and the foe has escaped my sword. — In Clon-ra's vale touch thou the harp; let Dura answer to thy voice; while some maid looks, from the wood, on thy long, yellow locks. — Fly from Lubar's echoing plain: it is the field of heroes.

King of Temora *), Malthos said, it is thine to lead in war. Thou art a fire to our eyes,

*) This speech of Malthos is, throughout, a severe reprimand to the blustering behaviour of Foldath.

eyes, on the dark-brown field. Like a blast thou hast past over hosts, and laid them low in blood: but who has heard thy words returning from the field? — The wrathful delight in death: their remembrance rests on the wounds of their spear. Strife is folded in their thoughts: their words are ever heard. — Thy course, chief of Moma, was like a troubled stream. The dead were rolled on thy path: but others also lift the spear. We were not feeble behind thee, but the foe was strong.

The king beheld the rising rage, and bending forward of either chief: for half-unsheathed, they held their swords: and rolled their silent eyes. — Now would they have mixed in horrid fray, had not the wrath of Cathmor burned. He drew his sword: it gleamed thro' night, to the high-flaming oak.

Sons

It abounds with that laconic eloquence, and indirect manner of address, which is so justly admired in the short speech of Ajax, in the ninth book of the Iliad.

Sons of pride, said the king, allay your swelling souls. Retire in night. — Why should my rage arise? Should I contend with both in arms? — It is no time for strife. Retire, ye clouds at my feast. Awake my soul no more. — They sunk from the king on either side; like *) two columns of morning-mist, when the sun rises, between them, on his glittering rocks. Dark is their rolling on either side; each towards its reedy pool.

Silent sat the chiefs at the feast. They looked, at times, on Atha's king, where he strode, on his rock, amidst his settling soul. — The host lay, at length, on the field: sleep

*) The poet should scarcely find, in all nature, a comparison so favourable as this to the superiority of Cathmor over his two chiefs. I shall illustrate this passage with another from a fragment of an ancient poem, just now in my hands. —

“As the sun is above the vapours, which his beams have raised; so is the soul of the king above the sons of fear. They roll dark below him; he rejoices in the orbe of his beams. But when feeble deeds wander on the soul of the king, he is a darkened sun rolled along the sky: the valley is sad below: flowers wither beneath the drops of the night.”

sleep descended on Moi - lena. — The voice of Fonar rose alone, beneath his distant tree. It rose in the praise of Cathmor son of Larthon *) of Lumon. But Cathmor did not hear

*) Lear - thon, *sea - wave*, the name of the chief of that colony of the Fir - bolg, which first migrated into Ireland. Larthon's first settlement in that country is related in the seventh book. He was the ancestor of Cathmor; and is here called *Larthon of Lumon*, from a high hill of that name in Inis - huna, the ancient seat of the Fir - bolg. — The poet preserves the character of Cathmor throughout. He had mentioned, in the first book, the aversion of that chief to praise, and we find him here lying at the side of a stream, that the noise of it might drown the voice of Fonar, who, according to the custom of the times, sung his eulogium in his *evening - song*. Tho' other chiefs, as well as Cathmor, might be averse to hear their own praise, we find it the universal policy of the times, to allow the bards, to be as extravagant as they pleased, in their encomiums on the leaders of armies, in the presence of their people. The vulgar, who had no great ability to judge for themselves, received the characters of their princes, entirely upon the faith of the bards. The good effects, which an high opinion of its ruler has

hear his praise. He lay at the roar of a stream :
The rustling breeze of night flew over his
whistling locks.

Cairbar came to his dreams, half-seen from
his low-hung cloud. Joy rose darkly in his fa-
ce: he had heard the song of Carril *). —

A

has upon a community, are too obvious to re-
quire explanation; on the other hand, distrust of
the abilities of leaders produce the worst conse-
quences.

*) Carril, the son of Kinfena, by the orders of
Offian, sung the funeral elegy at the tomb of Cair-
bar. See the second book, towards the end. In
all the poems of Offian, the visit of ghosts, to
their living friends, are short, and their langua-
ge obscure; both which circumstances tend to
throw a solemn gloom on these supernatural sce-
nes. Towards the latter end of the speech of the
ghost of Cairbar, he foretells the death of Cathmor,
by enumerating those signals, which, according to
the opinion of the times, preceded the death of
a person renowned. It was thought, that the
ghosts of deceased bards sung, for three nights
pre-

A blast sustained his dark-skirted cloud; which he seized in the bosom of night, as he rose, with his fame, towards his airy hall. Half-mixed with the noise of the stream, he poured his feeble words.

Joy meet the soul of Cathmor: his voice was heard on Moi-lena. The bard gave his song to Cairbar: he travels on the wind. My form is in my father's hall, like the gliding of a terrible light, which winds thro' the desert, in a stormy night. — No bard shall be wanting at thy tomb, when thou art lowly laid. The sons of song love the valiant. — Cathmor, thy name is a pleasant gale. — The mournful sounds arise! On Lubar's field there is a voice! — Louder still ye shadowy ghosts! the dead were full of fame. — Shrilly swells the feeble sound. — The rougher blast alone is heard! — Ah, soon is Cathmor low!

Rolled into himself he flew, wide on the bosom of his blast. The old oak felt his departure —

preceding the death (near the place where his tomb was to be raised) round an unsubstantial figure, which represented the body of the person who was to die.

parture, and shook its whistling head. The king started from rest, and took his dreadful spear. He lifts his eyes around. He sees but dark-skirted night.

*) It was the voice of the king; but now his form is gone. Unmarked is your path in the air, ye children of the night. Often, like a reflected beam, are ye seen in the desert wild; but ye retire in your blasts, before our steps approach. — Go then, ye feeble race! knowledge with you there is none. Your joys are weak, and like the dreams of our rest, or the light-winged thought that flies across the soul. — Shall Cathmor soon be low? Darkly laid in his narrow house? where no morning comes with her half-opened eyes. — Away, thou shade! to fight is mine, all further thought away! I rush forth, on eagle-wings, to seize my

*) The soliloquy of Cathmor abounds with that magnanimity and love of fame, which constitute the hero. Tho' staggered at first with the prediction of Cairbar's ghost, he soon comforts himself with the agreeable prospect of his future renown; and like Achilles, prefers a short and glorious life, to an obscure length of years in retirement and ease.

my beam of fame. — In the lonely vale of
streams, abides the little *) soul. — Years
roll

*) From this passage we learn, in what extreme contempt an indolent and unwarlike life was held in those days of heroism. Whatever a philosopher may say, in praise of quiet and retirement, I am far from thinking, but they weaken and debase the human mind. When the faculties of the soul are not exerted, they lose their vigour, and low and circumscribed notions take the place of noble and enlarged ideas. Action, on the contrary, and the vicissitudes of fortune which attend it, call forth, by turns, all the powers of the mind, and, by exercising, strengthen them. Hence it is, that in great and opulent states, when property and indolence are secured to individuals, we seldom meet with that strength of mind, which is so common in a nation, not far advanced in civilization. It is a curious, but just observation; that great kingdoms seldom produce great characters, which must be altogether attributed to that indolence and dissipation, which are the inseparable companions of too much property and security. Rome, it is certain, had more real great men within it, when its power was confined within the narrow bounds of Latium, than when its dominion extended
I:2 over

roll on, seasons return, but he is still unknown.

— In a blast comes cloudy death, and lays his grey head low. His ghost is rolled on the vapour of the fenny field. Its course is never on hills, or mossy vales of wind. — So shall not Cathmor depart, no boy in the field was he, who only marks the bed of roes, upon the echoing hills. My issuing forth was with kings, and my joy in dreadful plains: where broken hosts are rolled away, like seas before the wind.

So spoke the king of Alnecma, brightening in his rising soul: valour, like a pleasant flame, is gleaming within his breast. Stately is his stride on the heath: the beam of east is poured around. He saw his grey host on the field, wide-spreading their ridges in light. He rejoiced, like a spirit of heaven, whose steps
come

over all the known world; and one petty state of the Saxon heptarchy had, perhaps, as much genuine spirit in it, as the two British kingdoms united. As a state, we are much more powerful than our ancestors, but we would lose by comparing individuals with them.

come forth on his seas, when he beholds them peaceful round, and all the winds are laid. But soon he awakes the waves, and rolls them large to some ecchoing coast.

On the rushy bank of a stream, slept the daughter of Inis-huna. The helmet *) had fallen from her head. Her dreams were in the lands of her fathers. There morning was on the field: grey streams leapt down from the rocks; the breezes, in shadowy waves, fly o'er the rushy fields. There is the sound that prepares for the chace; and the moving of warriors from the hall. — But tall above the rest is the hero of streamy Atha: he bends his eye of love on Sul-malla, from his stately steps. She turns, with pride, her face away, and careless bends the bow.

Such

*) The discovery which succeeds this circumstance, is well imagined, and naturally conducted. The silence of Cathmor upon this occasion is more expressive of the emotions of his soul, than any speech which the poet could put into his mouth.

Such were the dreams of the maid, when Atha's warrior came. He saw her fair face before him, in the midst of her wandering locks. He knew the maid of Lumon. What should Cathmor do? — His sigh arose: his tears came down. But straight he turned away. — This is no time, king of Atha, to wake thy secret soul. The battle is rolled before thee, like a troubled stream.

He struck that warning bos *), wherein dwelt the voice of war. Erin rose around him, like the sound of eagle-wings. — Sul-malla started from sleep, in her disordered locks. She seized the helmet from earth, and trembled in her place. Why should they know in Erin of the daughter of Inis-huna? for she
re-

*) In order to understand this passage, it is necessary to look to the description of Cathmor's shield, which the poet has given us in the seventh book. This shield had seven principal bosses, the sound of each of which, when struck with a spear, conveyed a particular order from the king to his tribes. The sound of one of them, as here, was the signal for the army to assemble.

remembered the race of kings, and the pride of her soul arose.

Her steps are behind a rock, by the blue-winding stream *) of a vale: where dwelt the dark-brown hind, ere yet the war arose. Thither came the voice of Cathmor, at times, to Sul-malla's ear. Her soul is darkly sad; she pours her words on wind.

**) The dreams of Inis-huna departed: they are rolled away from my soul. I hear
not

*) This was not the valley of Lona, to which Sul-malla afterwards retired.

**) Of all passages in the works of Ossian these lyric pieces lose most, by a literal prose translation: as the beauty of them does not so much depend, on the strength of thought, as on the elegance of expression and harmony of numbers. It has been observed, that an author is put to the severest test, when he is stript of the ornaments of versification, and delivered down in another language in prose. Those, therefore, who have seen how awkward a figure
I 4 even

not the chace in my land. I am concealed in the skirts of war. I look forth from my cloud; but no beam appears, to light my path. I behold my warrior low : for the broad-shielded king is near ; he that overcomes in danger ; Fingal of the spears. — Spirit of departed Conmor, are thy steps on the bosom of winds? Comest thou, at times, to other lands, father of fad Sul-malia? Thou dost come, for I have heard thy voice at night ; while yet I rose on the wave to streamy Inis-fail. The ghost of fathers, they say *), can seize the souls of their

even Homer and Virgil make, in a version of this sort, will think the better of the compositions of Ossian.

*) Con-mor, the father of Sul-malla, was killed in that war, from which Cathmor delivered Inishuna. Larmar his son succeeded Conmor. It was the opinion of the times, when a person was reduced to a pitch of misery, which could admit of no alleviation, that the ghosts of his ancestors *called his soul away*. This supernatural kind of death was called *the voice of the dead*; and is believed by the superstitious vulgar to this day.

There

their race, while they behold them lonely in
the midst of woe. Call me, my father, when
the

There is no people in the world, perhaps,
who gave more universal credit to apparitions,
and the visits of the ghosts of the deceased to
their friends, than the common highlanders.
This is to be attributed as much, at least,
to the situation of the country they possess, as
to that credulous disposition which distinguishes
an unenlightened people. As their business was
feeding of cattle, in dark and extensive deserts,
so their journeys lay over wide and unfrequent-
ed heaths, where, often, they were obliged to
sleep in the open air, amidst the whistling of
winds, and roar of waterfalls. The gloominess
of the scenes around them was apt to beget
that melancholy disposition of mind, which most
readily receives impressions of the extraordinary
and supernatural kind. Falling asleep in this
gloomy mood, and their dreams being disturbed
by the noise of the elements around, it is no
matter of wonder, that they thought they heard
the *voice of the dead*. This *voice of the dead*,
however, was, perhaps, no more than a shriller
whistle of the winds in an old tree, or in the
chinks of a neighbouring rock. It is to this
cause I ascribe those many and improbable tales

the king is low on earth; for then I shall be
lonely in the midst of woe.

of ghosts, which we meet with in the high-
lands: for, in other respects, we do not find
that the highlanders are more credulous than
their neighbours.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIFTH.

ARGUMENT to BOOK V.

Offian, after a short address to the harp of Cona, describes the arrangement of both armies on either side of the river Lubar. Fingal gives the command to Fillan: but, at the same time, orders Gaul, the son of Morni, who had been wounded in the hand in the preceding battle, to assist him with his counsel. The army of the Fir-bolg is commanded by Foldath. The general onset is described. The great actions of Fillan. He kills Rothmar and Culmin. But when Fillan conquers, in one wing, Foldath presses hard on the other. He wounds Dermid, the son of Duthno, and puts the whole wing to flight. Dermid deliberates with himself, and, at last, resolves to put a stop to the progress of Foldath, by engaging him in single combat. — When the two chiefs were approaching towards one another, Fillan came suddenly to the relief of Dermid; engaged Foldath, and killed him. The behaviour of Malthos towards the fallen Foldath. Fillan puts the whole army of the Fir-bolg to flight. The book closes with an address to Clatho, the mother of that hero.

T E M O R A :

A N

EPIC POEM.

BOOK FIFTH.

*) **T**hou dweller between the shields, that
hang on high in Ossian's hall! de-
scend from thy place, o harp, and let me hear
thy

*) These abrupt addresses give great life to the poetry of Ossian. They are all in a lyric measure. The old men, who retain, on memory, the compositions of Ossian, shew much satisfaction, when they come to those parts of them, which are in rhyme, and take great pains to explain their beauties, and inculcate the meaning of their obsolete phrases, on the minds of their hearers. This attachment does not proceed from the superior beauty of these lyric pieces, but

ra-

thy voice. — Son of Alpin, strike the string;
thou must awake the soul of the bard. The
mur-

rather from a taste for rhyme, which the modern bards have established among the highlanders. Having no genius themselves for the sublime and pathetic, they placed the whole beauty of poetry in the returning harmony of similar sounds. The seducing charms of rhyme soon weaned their countrymen from that attachment, they long had to the recitative of Ossian: and, tho' they still admired his compositions, their admiration was founded more on his antiquity, and the detail of facts which he gave, than on his poetical excellence. Rhiming, in process of time, became so much reduced into a system, and was so universally understood, that every cow-herd composed tolerable verses. These poems, it is true, were a description of nature; but of nature in its rudest form; a group of uninteresting ideas dressed out in the flowing harmony of monotonous verses. Void of merit as those vulgar compositions were, they fell little short of the productions of the regular bards: for when all poetical excellence is confined to sounds alone, it is within the power of every one possessed of a good ear.

murmur of Lora's *) stream has rolled the tale away. — I stand in the cloud of years: few are its openings towards the past, and when the vision comes, it is but dim and dark. — I hear thee, harp of Cona; my soul returns, like a breeze, which the sun brings back to the vale, where dwelt the lazy mist.

**) Lubar is bright before me, in the windings of its vale. On either side, on their hills,
rise

*) Lora is often mentioned; it was a small and rapid stream in the neighbourhood of Selma. There is no vestige of this name now remaining; tho' it appears from a very old song, which the translator has seen, that one of the small rivers on the north-west coast was called Lora some centuries ago.

**) From several passages in the poem we may form a distinct idea of the scene of the action of Temora. At a small distance from one another rose the hills of Mora and Lona: the first possessed by Fingal, the second by the army of Cathmor. Through the intermediate plain ran the small river Lubar, on the banks of which all the battles were fought, excepting that between Cairbar and Oscar, related in the first book. This last mentioned engagement happened, to
the

rise the tall forms of the kings: their people are poured around them, bending forward to their words; as if their fathers spoke, descending from their winds. — But the kings were like two rocks in the midst, each with its dark head of pines, when they are seen in the desert, above low-falling mist. High on their face are streams, which spread their foam on blasts.

Beneath the voice of Cathmor poured Erin, like the sound of flame. Wide they came down to Lubar; before them is the stride of Foldath. But Cathmor retired to his hill, beneath his bending oaks. The tumbling of a stream is near the king: he lifts, at times, his gleaming spear.

the north of the hill of Mora, of which Fingal took possession, after the army of Cairbar fell back to that of Cathmor. At some distance, but within sight of Mora, towards the west, Lubar issued from the mountain of Crommal; and after a short course thro' the plain of Moi-lena, discharged itself into the sea near the field of battle. Behind the mountain of Crommal ran the small stream of Levath, on the banks of which Ferad-artho, the son of Cairbre, the only person remaining of the race of Conar, lived concealed in a cave, during the usurpation of Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul.

spear. It was a flame to his people, in the midst of war. Near him stood the daughter of Con-mor, leaning on her rock. She did not rejoice over the strife: her soul delighted not in blood. A valley *) spreads green behind the hill, with its three blue streams. The sun is there in silence; and the dun mountain-roes come down. On these are turned the eyes of Inis-huna's white-bosomed maid.

Fingal beheld; on high, the son of Borbar-duthul: he saw the deep-rolling of Erin, on the darkened plain. He struck that warning boss, which bids the people obey; when he sends his chiefs before them, to the field of renown. Wide rose their spears to the sun; their echoing shields reply around. — Fear, like a vapor, did not wind among the host: for he, the king, was near, the strength of streamy Morven. — Gladness brightened the hero, we heard his words of joy.

Like

*) It was to this valley Sul-malla retired, during the last and decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor. It is described in the seventh book, where it is called the vale of Lona, and the residence of a Druid.

Like the coming forth of winds, is the
 sound of Morven's sons ! They are mountain-
 waters, determined in their course. Hence is
 Fingal renowned, and his name in other lands.
 He was not a lonely beam in danger ; for
 your steps were always near. — But never
 was I a dreadful form, in your presence, dar-
 kened into wrath. My voice was no thunder
 to your ears : mine eyes sent forth no death. —
 When the haughty appeared, I beheld them
 not. They were forgot at my feasts : like mist
 they melted away. — A young beam is
 before you : few are his paths to war. They
 are few, but he is valiant : defend my dark-
 haired son. Bring him back with joy : Hereaf-
 ter he may stand alone. His form is like his
 fathers : his soul is a flame of their fire. —
 Son of car-borne Morni, move behind the son
 of Clatho : let thy voice reach his ear, from
 the skirts of war. Not unobserved rolls battle,
 before thee, breaker of the shields.

The king strode, at once, away to Cor-
 mul's *) lofty rock. As, slow, I lifted my
 steps

*) The rock of Cormul rose on the hill of Mora,
 and commanded a prospect of the field of battle.
 The speech of Fingal, which immediately preced-

steps behind ; came forward the strength of Gaul. His shield hung loose on its thong ; he spoke , in haste , to Ossian. — Bind *), son of Fingal, this shield, bind it high to the side of Gaul. The foe may behold it , and think I left the spear. If I shall fall, let my tomb be hid in the field: for fall I must without my fame: mine arm cannot lift the steel. Let not Eir-choma hear it, to blush between her locks. — Fillan, the mighty behold us ; let us not forget the strife. Why should they come, from their hills, to aid our flying field?

He strode onward, with the sound of his shield. My voice pursued him, as he went.

Can

as this passage, is worthy of being remarked, as the language, not only of a warlike, but a good king. The confidence which his people reposed in him, was as much the result of his clemency and military merit, as the consequence of that affection, which men, uncorrupted with the vices of advanced society, naturally have for the chief of their blood and hereditary prince.

*) It is necessary to remember, that Gaul was wounded; which occasions his requiring here the assistance of Ossian to bind his shield on his side.

Can the son of Morni fall without his fame in Erin? But the deeds of the mighty forsake their souls of fire. They rush careless over the fields of renown : their words are never heard. — I rejoiced over the steps of the chief: I strode to the rock of the king, where he sat in his wandering locks, amidst the mountain - wind.

In two dark ridges bend the hosts, towards each other, at Lubar. Here Foldath rose a pillar of darkness: there brightened the youth of Fillan. Each, with his spear in the stream, sent forth the voice of war. — Gaul struck the shield of Morven: at once they plunge in battle. — Steel poured its gleam on steel: like the fall of streams shone the field, when they mix their foam together, from two dark-browed rocks. — Behold he comes the son of fame: he lays the people low! Deaths sit on blasts around him! — Warriors strew thy paths, o Fillan!

*) Rothmar, the shield of warriors, stood between two chinky rocks. Two oaks, which winds

*) Roth-mar, *the sound of the sea before a storm.*
 Drumanard, *high ridge.* Culmin, *soft-haired.*
 Cull-allin, *beautiful locks.* Strutha, *streamy river.*

winds had bent from high, spread their branches on either side. He rolls his darkening eyes on Fillan, and silent, shades his friends. Fingal saw the approaching fight; and all his soul arose. — But as the stone of Loda *) falls,

*) By the stone of Loda, as I have remarked in my notes on some other poems of Ossian, is meant a place of worship among the Scandinavians. Ossian, in his many expeditions to Orkney and Scandinavia, became acquainted with some of the rites of the religion which prevailed in those countries, and frequently alludes to them in his poems. There are some ruins, and circular pales of stone, remaining still in Orkney, and the islands of Shetland, which retain, to this day, the name of *Loda* or *Loden*. They seem to have differed materially, in their construction, from those Druidical monuments, which remain in Britain, and the western isles. The places of worship among the Scandinavians were originally rude and unadorned. In after ages, when they opened a communication with other nations, they adopted their manners, and built temples. That at Upsal, in Sweden, was amazingly rich and magnificent. Haquin, of Norway, built one, near Drontheim, little inferior to the former; and it went always under the

falls, shook, at once, from rocking Druman-
ard, when spirits heave the earth in their wrath;
so fell blue-shielded Rothmar.

Near are the steps of Culmin; the youth
came, bursting into tears. Wrathful he cut
the wind, ere yet he mixed his strokes with
Fillan. He had first bent the bow with Roth-
mar, at the rock of his own blue streams.
There they had marked the place of the roe,
as the sun-beam flew over the fern. —
Why, son of Cul-allin, dost thou rush on
that beam *) of light? it is a fire that con-
sumes. — Youth of Strutha retire. Your
fathers

name of Loden. *Mallet, introduction à l'histoi-
re de Dannemarc.*

*) The poet, metaphorically, calls Fillan a beam of
light. Culmin, mentioned here, was the son
of Clonmar, chief of Strutha, by the beautiful
Cul-allin. She was so remarkable for the beauty
of her person, that she is introduced, frequent-
ly, in the similes and allusions of antient poe-
try. *Mar Chul-aluin Strutha nan fian*; is a line
of Ossian in another poem; i. e. *Lovely as Cul-
allin of Strutha of the storms.*

fathers were not equal, in the glittering strife of the field.

The mother of Culmin remains in the hall; she looks forth on blue-rolling Strutha. A whirlwind rises, on the stream, dark-eddying round the ghost of her son. His dogs *) are howling in their place: his shield is bloody in the hall. — “Art thou fallen, my fair-haired son, in Erin’s dismal war?”

As

*) Dogs were thought to be sensible of the death of their master, let it happen at ever so great a distance. It was also the opinion of the times, that the arms which warriors left at home became bloody, when they themselves fell in battle. It was from those signs that Cul-allin is supposed to understand, that her son is killed; in which she is confirmed by the appearance of his ghost. — Her sudden and short exclamation, on the occasion, is more affecting, than if she had extended her complaints to a greater length. The attitude of the fallen youth, and Fillan’s reflexions over him, are natural and judicious, and come forcibly back on the mind, when we consider, that the supposed situation of the father of Culmin, was so similar to that of Fingal, after the death of Fillan himself.

As a roe, pierced in secret, lies panting,
 by her wonted streams; the hunter looks over
 her feet of wind, and remembers her stately
 bounding before: so lay the son of Cul-allin,
 beneath the eye of Fillan. His hair is rolled
 in a little stream: his blood wandered on his
 shield. Still his hand held the sword, that
 failed him in the day of his danger. —
 “Thou art fallen, said Fillan, ere yet thy
 fame was heard. — Thy father sent thee
 to war: and he expects to hear thy deeds.
 He is grey, perhaps, at his streams, turning
 his dim eyes towards Moi-lena. But thou
 shalt not return, with the spoil of the fallen
 foe.”

Fillan poured the flight of Erin before
 him, over the echoing heath. — But, man
 on man, fell Morven before the dark-red rage
 of Foldath: for, far on the field, he poured
 the roar of half his tribes. Dermid *) stood
 before him in wrath: the sons of Cona gather
 round. But his shield is cleft by Foldath,
 and his people poured over the heath.

Then

*) This Dermid is, probably, the same with *Dermid O duine*, who makes so great a figure in the fictions of the Irish bards.

Then said the foe, in his pride, They have fled, and my fame begins. Go, Malthos, and bid the king *) to guard the dark-rolling of ocean; that Fingal may not escape from my sword. He must lie on earth. Beside some fen shall his tomb be seen. It shall rise without a song. His ghost shall hover in mist over the reedy pool.

Malthos heard with darkening doubt; he rolled his silent eyes. — He knew the pride of Foldath, and looked up to the king on his hill; then, darkly turning, he plunged his sword in war.

In Clono's **) narrow vale, were bent two trees above the streams; dark in his grief stood

*) Cathmor.

**) This valley had its name from Clono, son of Lethmal of Lora, one of the ancestors of Dermid, the son of Duthno. His history is thus related in an old poem. In the days of Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland, Clono passed over into that kingdom, from Caledonia, to aid Conar against the Fir-bolg. Being remarkable for the beauty of his person,

stood Duthno's silent son. The blood poured from his thigh : his shield lay broken near. His spear leaned against a stone. Why, Dermid, why so sad ?

I hear

he soon drew the attention of Sulmin, the young wife of an Irish chief. She disclosed her passion, which was not properly returned by the Caledonian. The lady sickened, thro' disappointment, and her love for Clono came to the ears of her husband. Fired with jealousy, he vowed revenge. Clono, to avoid his rage, departed from Temora, in order to pass over into Scotland; and being benighted in the valley mentioned here, he laid himself down to sleep. *There, (to use the words of the poet) Lethmal descended in the dreams of Clono; and told him, that danger was near.* For the reader's amusement I shall translate the vision, which does not want poetical merit.

GHOST OF LETHMAL.

"Arise from thy bed of moss; son of low-laid Lethmal, arise. The sound of the coming of foes descends along the wind.

CLONO.

Whose voice is that, like many streams, in the season of my rest ?

Ghost

I hear the roar of battle. My people are alone. My steps are slow on the heath; and no shield is mine. — Shall he then prevail?
It

Ghost of LETHMAL.

Arise, thou dweller of the souls of the lovely;
son of Lethmal, arise.

CLONO.

How dreary is the night! The moon is darkened in the sky; red are the paths of ghosts, along its sullen face! Green-skirted meteors set around. Dull is the roaring of streams, from the valley of dim forms. I hear thee, spirit of my father, on the eddying course of the wind. I hear thee, but thou bendest not, forward, thy tall form, from the skirts of night.

As Clono prepared to depart, the husband of Sulmin came up, with his numerous attendants. Clono defended himself, but, after a gallant resistance, he was overpowered and slain. He was buried in the place where he was killed, and the valley was called after his name. Dermid, in his request to Gaul the son of Morni, which immediately follows this paragraph, alludes to the tomb of Clono, and his own connection with that unfortunate chief.

— It is then after Dermid is low! I will call thee forth, o Foldath, and meet thee yet in fight,

He took his spear, with dreadful joy. The son of Morni came. — “Stay, son of Duthno, stay thy speed; thy steps are marked with blood. No bossy shield is thine. Why shouldst thou fall unarmed?” — King of Strumon, give thou thy shield. It has often rolled back the war. I shall stop the chief, in his course. — Son of Morni, dost thou behold that stone? It lifts its grey head thro’ grass. There dwells a chief of the race of Dermid. — Place me there in night *).

He

*) The brevity of the speech of Gaul, and the laconic reply of Dermid, are judicious and well suited to the hurry of the occasion. The incidents which Ossian has chosen to diversify his battles, are interesting, and never fail to awaken our attention. I know, that want of particularity in the wounds, and diversity in the fall of those that are slain, have been among the objections, started, to the poetical merit of Ossian’s poems. The criticism, without partiality I may

He slowly rose against the hill, and saw the troubled field. The gleaming ridges of the fight, disjoined and broken round. — As distant fires, on heath by night, now seem as lost in smok, then rearing their red streams on the hill, as blow or cease the winds: so met the intermitting war the eye of broad-shielded Dermid. — Thro' the host are the strides of Foldath; like some dark ship on wintry waves, when it issues from between two isles, to sport on ecchoing seas.

Dermid,

I may say it, is unjust: for our poet has introduced as great a variety of this sort, as he, with propriety, could within the compass of so short poems. It is confessed, that Homer has a greater variety of deaths, than any other poet that ever appeared. His great knowledge in anatomy can never be disputed: but, I am far from thinking, that his battles, even with all their novelty of wounds, are the most beautiful parts of his poems. The human mind dwells with disgust upon a protracted scene of carnage; and, tho' the introduction of the terrible is necessary to the grandeur of heroic poetry, yet I am convinced, that a medium ought to be observed.

Dermid, with rage, beheld his course. He strove to rush along. But he failed in the midst of his steps; and the big tear came down. — He sounded his father's horn; and thrice struck his bossy shield. He called thrice the name of Foldath, from his roaring tribes. — Foldath, with joy, beheld the chief: he lifted high his bloody spear. — As a rock is marked with streams, that fell troubled down its side in a storm: so, streaked with wandering blood, is the dark form of Moma.

The host, on either side, withdrew from the contending of kings. — They raised, at once, their gleaming points. — Rushing came Fillan of Moruth *). Three paces back
Fol-

*) The rapidity of this verse, which indeed is but faintly imitated in the translation, is amazingly expressive in the original. One hears the very rattling of the armour of Fillan. The intervention of Fillan is necessary here: for as Dermid was wounded before, it is not to be supposed, he could be a match for Foldath. Fillan is often, poetically, called the *son of Moruth*, from a stream of that name in Morven, near which he was born.

Foldath withdrew; dazzled with that beam of light, which came, as issuing from a cloud, to save the wounded hero. — Growing in his pride he stood, and called forth all his steel.

As meet two broad-winged eagles, in their sounding strife, on the winds: so rushed the two chiefs, on Moi-lena, into gloomy fight. — By turns are the steps of the kings *) forward on their rocks; for now the dusky war seems to descend on their swords. — Cathmor feels the joy of warriors, on his mossy hill: their joy in secret, when dangers rise equal to their souls. His eye is not turned on Lubar, but on Morven's dreadful king; for he beheld him, on Mora, rising in his arms.

Foldath **) fell on his shield; the spear of Fillan pierced the king. Nor looked the youth

*) Fingal and Cathmor.

**) The fall of Foldath, if we may believe tradition, was predicted to him, before he had left his own country, to join Cairbar, in his designs on the Irish throne. He went to the cave of Moma, to enquire of the spirits of his fathers, concerning the success of the enterprise of Cairbar.

youth on the fallen, but onward rolled the war. The hundred voices of death arose. —

“Stay, son of Fingal, stay thy speed. Behold-
est

bar. The responses of oracles are always attended with obscurity, and liable to a double meaning: Foldath, therefore, put a favourable interpretation on the prediction, and pursued his adopted plan of aggrandizing himself with the family of Atha. I shall, here, translate the answer of the ghosts of his ancestors, as it was handed down by tradition. Whether the legend is really ancient, or the invention of a late age, I shall not pretend, to determine; tho', from the phraseology, I should the last.

FOLDATH, addressing the spirits of his fathers.

Dark, I stand in your presence; fathers of Foldath, hear. Shall my steps pass over Atha, to Ullin of the roes?

The Answer.

Thy steps shall pass over Atha, to the green dwelling of kings. There shall thy stature arise, over the fallen, like a pillar of thunder-clouds. There, terrible in darkness, shalt thou stand, till the reflected beam, or Clon-cath of Moruth, come; Moruth of many streams, that roars in distant lands.”

est thou not that gleaming form, a dreadful sign of death? Awaken not the king of Alnecma. Return, son of blue-eyed Clatho."

Malthos *) saw Foldath low. He darkly stood above the king. Hatred was rolled from his

Cloncath, or *reflected beam*, say my traditional authors, was the name of the sword of Filian; so that it was, in the latent signification of the word *Clon-cath*, that the deception lay. My principal reason for introducing this note, is, that, if this tradition is equally ancient with the poem, which, by the bye, is doubtful, it serves to shew, that the religion of the Fir-bolg differed from that of the Caledonians, as we never find the latter enquiring of the spirits of their deceased ancestors.

*) The characters of Foldath and Malthos are well sustained. They were both dark and furly, but each in a different way. Foldath was impetuous and cruel; Malthos stubborn and incredulous. Their attachment to the family of Atha was equal; their bravery in battle the same. Foldath was vain and ostentatious: Malthos unindulgent, but generous. His behaviour here, towards his

L

enemy

his soul. He seemed a rock in the desert, on whose dark side are the trickling of waters, when the flow-failing mist has left it, and its trees are blasted with winds. He spoke to the dying hero, about the narrow house. Whether shall thy grey stone rise in Ullin? or in Moma's *) woody land, where the sun looks, in secret, on the blue streams of Dalru-tho **)? There are the steps of thy daughter, blue-eyed Dardu-lena.

Remem-

enemy Foldath, shews, that a good heart often lies concealed under a gloomy and sullen character.

*) Moma was the name of a country in the south of Connaught, once famous for being the residence of an Arch-druid. The cave of Moma was thought to be inhabited by the spirits of the chiefs of the Fir-bolg, and their posterity sent to enquire there, as to an oracle, concerning the issue of their wars.

**) Dal-ruäth, *parched or sandy field*. The etymology of Dardu-lena is uncertain. The daughter of Foldath was, probably, so called, from a place in Ulster, where her father had defeated part of the adherents of Artho, king of Ireland.

Dor-

Remembereſt thou her, ſaid Foldath, be-
cauſe no ſon is mine; no youth to roll the
battle before him, in revenge of me? Malthos,
I am revenged. I was not peaceful in the
field. Raiſe the tombs of thoſe I have ſlain,
around my narrow houſe. Often ſhall I for-
ſake the blaſt, to rejoice above their graves;
when I behold them ſpread around, with their
long-whiſtling graſs.

His ſoul ruſhed to the vales of Moma;
and came to Dardu-lena's dreams, where ſhe
ſlept, by Dalrutho's ſtream, returning from the
chace of the hinds. Her bow is near the maid,
unſtrung; the breezes fold her long hair on
her breasts. Cloathed in the beauty of youth,
the love of heroes lay. Dark bending, from
the ſkirts of the wood, her wounded father
came. He appeared, at times, then ſeemed as
hid in miſt. — Burſting into tears ſhe ro-
ſe: ſhe knew that the chief was low. To her
came

Dor-du-lena; the dark wood of Moi-lena. As
Foldath was proud and oſtentatious, it would
appear, that he transferred the name of a place,
where he himſelf had been victorious, to his
daughter.

came a beam from his soul, when folded in its
storms. Thou wert the last of his race, blue-
eyed Dardu-lena!

Wide-spreading over ecchoing Lubar, the
flight of Bolga is rolled along. Fillan hung
forward on their steps; and strewed, with dead,
the heath. Fingal rejoiced over his son. —
Blue-shielded Cathmor rose. — *). Son of
Alpin, bring the harp: give Fillan's praise to
the

*) These sudden transitions from the subject are not
uncommon in the compositions of Ossian. That
in this place has a peculiar beauty and propriety.
The suspense, in which the mind of the reader
is left, conveys the idea of Fillan's danger more
forcibly home, than any description the poet
could introduce. There is a sort of eloquence,
in silence with propriety. A minute detail of
the circumstances of an important scene is gene-
rally cold and insipid. The human mind, free
and fond of thinking for itself, is disgusted to
find every thing done by the poet. It is, there-
fore, his business only to mark the most striking
out-lines, and to allow the imaginations of his
readers to finish the figure for themselves.

The

the wind: raise high his praise, in my hall,
while yet he shines in war.

Leave, blue-eyed Clatho, leave thy hall.
Behold that early beam of thine. The host is
withered in its course. No further look — it
is dark. — Light-trembling from the harp,
strike, virgins, strike the sound. — No hun-
ter he descends, from the dewy haunt of the
bounding roe. He bends not his bow on the
wind; or sends his grey arrow abroad.

Deep-folded in red war, the battle rolls
against his side. Or, striding midst the ridgy
strife, he pours the deaths of thousands forth.
Fillan is like a spirit of heaven, that descends
from

The address to Clatho, the mother of Fillan,
which concludes this book, if we regard the ver-
sification of the original, is one of the most
beautiful passages in the poem. The wild sim-
plicity and harmony of its cadences are inimit-
ably beautiful. It is sung still by many in the
north, and is distinguished by the name of *Laoi
chaon Chlatbo*: i. e. *The harmonious hymn of
Clatho*. The book ends in the afternoon of the
third day, from the opening of the poem.

from the skirt of his blast. The troubled ocean
feels his steps, as he strides from wave to wa-
ve. His path kindles behind him; islands shake
their heads on the heaving seas.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SIXTH.

THE MORAL

AND

EPIC POEM

BOOK SIXTH

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

This book opens with a speech of Fingal, who sees Cathmor descending to the assistance of his flying army. The king dispatches Ossian to the relief of Fillan. He himself retires behind the rock of Cormul, to avoid the sight of the engagement between his son and Cathmor. Ossian advances. The descent of Cathmor described. He rallies the army, renews the battle, and, before Ossian could arrive, engages Fillan himself. Upon the approach of Ossian, the combat between the two heroes ceases. Ossian and Cathmor prepare to fight, but night coming on prevents them. Ossian returns to the place where Cathmor and Fillan fought. He finds Fillan mortally wounded, and leaning against a rock. Their discourse. Fillan dies: his body is laid, by Ossian, in a neighbouring cave. — The Caledonian army return to Fingal. He questions them about his son, and understanding that he was killed, retires, in silence, to the rock of Cormul. — Upon the retreat of the army of Fingal, the Fir-bolg advance.

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

Cathmor finds Bran, one of the dogs of Fingal, lying on the shield of Fillan, before the entrance of the cave, where the body of that hero lay. His reflexions thereupon. He returns, in a melancholy mood, to his army. Malthos endeavours to comfort him, by the example of his father Borbar-duthul. Cathmor retires to rest. The song of Sul-malla concludes the book, which ends about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

TEMO.

T E M O R A:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SIXTH.

*) Cathmor rises on his ecchoing hill! Shall
 Fingal take the sword of Luno? But
 what should become of thy fame, son of white-
 bosom-

*) I have, in a preceding note, observed that the abrupt manner of Ossian partakes much of the nature of the Drama. The opening of this book is a confirmation of the justness of this observation. Instead of a long detail of circumstances delivered by the poet himself, about the descent of Cathmor from the hill, whereon he sat to behold the battle, he puts the narration in the mouth of Fingal. The relation acquires importance from the character of the speaker. The concern which Fingal shews, when he be-
 holds

bosomed Clatho? Turn not thine eyes from
Fingal, daughter of Inistore. I shall not
quench thy early beam; it shines along my
soul.

holds the *rising of Cathmor*, raises our ideas of the valour of that hero to the highest pitch. The apostrophes which are crowded on one another, are expressive of the perturbation of Fingal's soul, and of his fear for his son, who was not a match for the king of Ireland. The conduct of the poet in removing Fingal from the sight of the engagement, is very judicious; for the king might be induced, from seeing the inequality of the combat between Fillan and Cathmor, to come to battle himself, and so bring about the catastrophe of the poem prematurely. The removal of Fingal affords room to the poet for introducing those affecting scenes, which immediately succeed, and are among the chief beauties of the poem. — They who can deny art to Ossian, in conducting the catastrophe of *Temora*, are certainly more prejudiced against the age he lived in, than is consistent with good sense. I cannot finish this note, without observing the delicacy and propriety of Fingal's address to Ossian. By the appellation of the *father of Osear*, he raises at once, in the mind of the hero, all that tenderness for the safety of Fillan, which a situation so similar to that of his own son, when he fell, was capable to suggest.

soul. — But rise, o wood-skirted Mora,
 rise, between the war and me! Why should
 Fingal behold the strife, lest his dark-haired
 warrior should fall! — Amidst the song,
 o Carril, pour the sound of the trembling harp:
 here are the voices of rocks, and bright tumb-
 ling of waters. Father of Oscar, lift the spear;
 defend the young in arms. Conceal thy steps
 from Fillan's eyes. — He must not know,
 that I doubt his steel. — No cloud of mi-
 ne shall rise, my son, upon thy soul of fire!

He sunk behind his rock, amidst the sound
 of Carril's song. — Brightening, in my
 growing soul, I took the spear of Temora *).
 I saw, along Moi-lena, the wild tumbling
 of

*) The *spear of Temora* was that, which Oscar had
 received, in a present, from Cormac, the son
 of Artho, king of Ireland. It was of it that
 Cairbar made the pretext, for quarrelling with
 Oscar, at the feast, in the first book. After the
 death of Oscar we find it always in the hands
 of Ossian. It is said, in another poem, that it
 was preserved, as a relique, at Temora, from
 the days of Conar, the son of Tremnor, the
 first king of Ireland.

of battle, the strife of death, in gleaming rows, disjoined and broken round. Fillan is a beam of fire: from wing to wing is his wasteful course. The ridges of war melt before him. They are rolled, in smog, from the fields.

*) Now is the coming forth of Cathmor, in the armour of kings! Dark-rolled the eagle's wing above his helmet of fire. Unconcerned are his steps, as if they were to the chace of

*) The appearance of Cathmor is magnificent: his unconcerned gait, and the effect which his very voice has upon his flying army, are circumstances calculated to raise our ideas of his superior merit and valour. Ossian is very impartial with regard to his enemies: this, however, cannot be said of other poets of great eminence and unquestioned merit. Milton, of the first class of poets, is undoubtedly the most irreprehensible in this respect; for we always pity or admire his Devil, but seldom detest him, even tho' he is the arch-enemy of our species. Mankind generally take sides with the unfortunate and daring. It is from this disposition that many readers, tho' otherwise good christians, have almost wished success to Satan, in his desperate and daring voyage from hell, through the regions of chaos and night.

of Atha. He raised, at times, his dreadful voice; Erin, abashed, gathered round. — Their souls returned back, like a stream: they wondered at the steps of their fear: for he rose, like the beam of the morning on a haunted heath: the traveller looks back, with bending eye, on the field of dreadful forms.

Sudden, from the rock of Moi-lena, are Sul-malla's trembling steps. An oak took the spear from her hand; half-bent she loosed the lance: but then are her eyes on the king, from amidst her wandering locks. — No friendly strife is before thee: no light contending of bows, as when the youth of Cluba *) came forth beneath the eye of Connor.

As the rock of Runo, which takes the passing clouds for its robe, seems growing, in gathered darkness, over the streamy heath: so seem-

*) Clu-ba, *winding bay*; an arm of the sea in Inishuna, or the western coast of South-Britain. It was in this bay that Cathmor was wind-bound, when Sul-malla came, in the disguise of a young warrior, to accompany him in his voyage to Ireland. Connor, the father of Sul-malla, as we learn from her soliloquy, at the close of the fourth book, was dead before the departure of his daughter.

seemed the chief of Atha taller, as gathered his people round. — As different blasts fly over the sea, each behind its dark-blue wave, so Cathmor's words, on every side, poured his warriors forth. — Nor silent on his hill is Fillan; he mixed his words with his echoing shield. An eagle he seemed, with founding wings, calling the wind to his rock, when he sees the coming forth of the roes, on Lutha's*) rushy field.

Now they bent forward in battle: death's hundred voices rose; for the kings, on either side, were like fires on the souls of the people. — I bounded along: high rocks and trees rushed tall between the war and me. — But I heard the noise of steel, between my clanging arms. Rising, gleaming, on the hill, I beheld the backward steps of hosts: their backward steps, on either side, and wildly-looking eyes. The chiefs were met in dreadful fight; the two blue-shielded kings. Tall and dark,

*) Lutha was the name of a valley in Morven, in the days of Ossian. There dwelt Toscar the son of Conloch, the father of Malvina, who, upon that account, is often called *the maid of Lutha*. Lutha signifies *swift stream*.

dark, thro' gleams of steel, are seen the striving heroes. — I rushed. — My fears for Fillan flew, burning across my soul.

I came; nor Bathor fled; nor yet advanced: he sidelong stalked along. An icy rock, cold, tall he seemed. I called forth all my steel. — Silent a while we strode, on either side of a rushing stream: then, sudden turning, all at once, we raised our pointed spears. — We raised our spears, but night came down. It is dark and silent around; but where the distant steps of hosts are founding over the heath.

I came to the place where Fillan *) fought. Nor voice, nor sound is there. A broken helmet lay on earth; a buckler cleft in twain. Where,

*) The scenery of the place where Fillan fought, and the situation of that hero, are picturesque and affecting. The distress, which succeeds, is heightened by Ossian's being ignorant, for some time, that his brother was wounded. This kind of suspense is frequent in Ossian's poems. The more unexpected a thing is, the greater impression it makes on the mind, when it comes.

Where, Fillan, where art thou, young chief
 of echoing Morven? He heard me leaning
 against a rock, which bent its grey head over
 the stream. He heard, but fullen, dark he
 stood. At length I saw the chief.

Why standest thou, robed in darkness, son
 of woody Selma? Bright is thy path, my bro-
 ther, in this dark-brown field. Long has been
 thy strife in battle. Now the horn of Fingal
 is heard. Ascend to the cloud of thy father,
 to his hill of feasts. In the evening-mist he
 sits, and hears the voice of Carril's harp. Car-
 ry joy to the aged, young breaker of the
 shields.

Can the vanquished carry joy? Ossian: no
 shield is mine. It lies broken on the field.
 The eagle-wing of my helmet is torn. It is
 when foes fly before them, that fathers delight
 in their sons. But their sighs burst forth, in
 secret, when their young warriors yield. —
 No: Fillan will not behold the king. Why
 should the hero mourn?

Son of blue-eyed Clatho, why dost thou
 awake my soul? Wert thou not a burning fire
 before him; and shall he not rejoice? —
 Such fame belonged not to Ossian; yet was the
 king

king still a sun to me. He looked on my steps, with joy: shadows never rose on his face. — Ascend, o Fillan, to Mora: his feast is spread in the folds of mist.

Ossian, give me that broken shield: these feathers that are rolled in the wind. Place them near to Fillan, that less of his fame may fall. Ossian, I begin to fail. — Lay me in that hollow rock. Raise no stone above: lest one should ask about my fame. I am fallen in the first of my fields; fallen without renown. Let thy voice alone send joy to my flying soul. Why should the feeble know, where dwells the lost beam of Clatho *)?

Is

*) In this, as well as the former publication, I have only admitted into the text compleat poems; or independent episodes: the fragments which remain of the compositions of Ossian, I have chosen to throw, occasionally, into the notes. I shall here give a translation of a part of a poem concerning the death of Fillan. It is a dialogue between Clatho the mother, and Bosmina the sister, of that hero.

CLATHO.

“Daughter of Fingal, arise: thou light between thy locks. Lift thy fair head from rest,

M 2

soft-

Is thy spirit on the eddying winds, blue-eyed king of shields? Joy pursue my hero, thro'

soft-gliding sun-beam of Selma! I beheld thy arms, on thy breast, white-tossed amidst thy wandering locks: when the rustling breeze of the morning came from the desert of streams. Hast thou seen thy fathers, Bos-mina, descending in thy dreams? Arise, daughter of Clatho; dwells there aught of grief in thy soul?

B O S - M I N A.

A thin form passed before me, fading as it flew; like the darkening wave of a breeze, along a field of grass. Descend, from thy wall, o harp, and call back the soul of Bos-mina; it has rolled away, like a stream. I hear thy pleasant sound. — I hear thee, o harp, and my voice shall rise.

How often shall ye rush to war, ye dwellers of my soul? Your paths are distant, king of men, in Erin of blue streams. Lift thy wing, thou southern breeze, from Clono's darkening heath: spread the sails of Fingal towards the bays of his land.

But who is that, in his strength, darkening in the presence of war? His arm stretches to the foe, like the beam of the sickly sun; when his
side

thro' his folded clouds. The forms of thy fathers, o Fillan, bend to receive their son. I behold the spreading of their fire on Mora; the blue-rolling of their misty wreaths. — Joy meet thee, my brother. — But we are dark and

side is crufted with darknefs; and he rolls his dismal courfe thro' the fky. — Who is it, but the father of Bos-mina? Shall he return till danger is paft!

Fillan, thou art a beam by his fide; beautiful but terrible, is thy light. Thy fword is before thee, a blue fire of night. When fhalt thou return to thy roes? to the freams of thy rufhy fields? When fhall I behold thee from Mora, while winds ftrew my long locks on mofs! — But fhall a young eagle return from the field, where the heroes fall!

CLATHO.

Soft, as the fong of Loda, is the voice of Selma's maid. Pleasant to the ear of Clatho is the name of the breaker of fhields. — Behold, the king comes from ocean: the fhield of Morven is borne by bards. The foe has fled before him, like the departure of mift. — I hear not the founding wings of my eagle; the rufhing forth of the fon of Clatho. — Thou art dark, o Fingal; fhall he not return? * * * *

and sad. I behold the foe round the aged,
and the wasting away of his fame. Thou art
left alone in the field, grey-haired king of
Selma.

I laid him in the hollow rock, at the roar
of the nightly stream. One red star looked in
on the hero: winds lift, at times, his locks.
I listened: no sound was heard: for the warri-
or slept. — As lightning on a cloud, a
thought came rushing over my soul. — My
eyes rolled in fire: my stride was in the clang
of steel.

I will find thee, chief of Atha, in the
gathering of thy thousands. Why should that
cloud escape, that quenched our early beam?
Kindle your meteors, my fathers, to light my
daring steps. I will consume in wrath. *) —
Should

*) Here the sentence is designedly left unfinished by
the poet. The sense is, that he was resolved,
like a destroying fire, to consume Cathmor, who
had killed his brother. In the midst of this re-
solution, the situation of Fingal suggests itself to
him, in a very strong light. He resolves to re-
turn, to assist the king in prosecuting the war.
— But then his shame for not defending his
bro-

Should I not return! the king is without a son,
grey-haired amidst his foes. His arm is not
as in the days of old: his fame grows dim in
Erin. Let me not behold him from high, laid
low in his latter field. — But can I return
to the king? Will he not ask about his son?

‘Thou

brother, recurs to him. — He is determined
again to go and find out Caimor. — We
may consider him, as in the act of advancing
towards the enemy, when the horn of Fingal
sounded on Mora, and called back his people to
his presence. — This soliloquy is natural: the
resolutions which so suddenly follow one another,
are expressive of a mind extremely agitated with
sorrow and conscious shame: yet the behaviour
of Ossian, in his execution of the command of
Fingal, is so irreprehensible, that it is not easy to
determine, where he failed in his duty. The
truth is, that, when men fail in designs which
they ardently wish to accomplish, they naturally
blame themselves, as the chief cause of their
disappointment. The comparison, with which
the poet concludes his soliloquy, is very fanciful;
and well adapted to the ideas of those, who li-
ve in a country, where lightning is extremely
common.

“Thou oughtest to defend young Fillan.” —
 I will meet the foe. — Green Inisfail, thy
 founding tread is pleasant to my ear: I rush
 on thy ridgy host, to shun the eyes of Fingal.
 — I hear the voice of the king, on Mora’s
 misty top! He calls his two sons: I come, my
 father, in my grief. — I come like an eag-
 le, which the flame of night met in the desert,
 and spoiled of half his wings.

*) Distant, round the king, on Mora, the
 broken ridges of Morven are rolled. They
 turned their eyes: each darkly bends, on his
 own ashen spear. — Silent stood the king
 in

*) This scene is solemn. The poet always places
 his chief character amidst objects which favour
 the sublime. The face of the country, the night,
 the broken remains of a defeated army, and,
 above all, the attitude and silence of Fingal
 himself, are circumstances calculated to impress
 an awful idea on the mind. Ossian is most
 successful in his night-descriptions. Dark imag-
 es suited the melancholy temper of his mind.
 His poems were all composed, after the active
 part of his life was over; when he was blind,
 and had survived all the companions of his
 youth: we therefore find a veil of melancholy
 thrown over the whole.

in the midst. Thought on thought rolled over his soul. As waves on a secret mountain-lake, each with its back of foam. — He looked; no son appeared, with his long-beaming spear. The sighs rose, crowding, from his soul; but he concealed his grief. — At length I stood beneath an oak. No voice of mine was heard. What could I say to Fingal in his hour of woe? — His words rose, at length, in the midst: the people shrunk backward, as he spoke *).

Where

*) The abashed behaviour of the army of Fingal proceeds rather from shame than fear. The king was not of a tyrannical disposition: *He*, as he professes himself in the fifth book, *never was a dreadful form, in their presence, darkened into wrath. His voice was no thunder to their ears: his eye sent forth no death.* — The first ages of society are not the times of arbitrary power. As the wants of mankind are few, they retain their independence. It is an advanced state of civilization, that moulds the mind to that submission to government, of which ambitious magistrates take advantage, and raise themselves into absolute power.

Where is the son of Selma, he who led
in war? I behold not his steps, among my people,

It is a vulgar error, that the common Highlanders lived, in abject slavery, under their chiefs. Their high ideas of, and attachment to, the heads of their families, probably, led the unintelligent into this mistake. — When the honour of the tribe was concerned, the commands of the chief were obeyed, without restriction: but, if individuals were oppressed, they threw themselves into the arms of a neighbouring clan, assumed a new name, and were encouraged and protected. The fear of this desertion, no doubt, made the chiefs cautious in their government. As their consequence, in the eyes of others, was in proportion to the number of their people, they took care to avoid every thing that tended to diminish it.

It was but very lately that the authority of the laws extended to the Highlands. Before that time the clans were governed, in civil affairs, not by the verbal commands of the chief, but by what they called *Clechda*, or the traditional precedents of their ancestors. When differences happened between individuals, some of the oldest men in the tribe were chosen umpires between
the.

ple, returning from the field. Fell the young bounding roe, who was so stately on my hills? — He fell; — for ye are silent. The shield of war is broken. — Let his armour be near to Fingal; and the sword of dark-brown Luno. I am waked on my hills: with morning I descend to war.

*) High

the parties, to decide according to the *Clechda*. The chief interposed his authority, and, invariably, enforced the decision. — In their wars, which were frequent, on account of family-feuds, the chief was less reserved in the execution of his authority; and even then he seldom extended it to the taking the life of any of his tribe. — No crime was capital, except murder; and that was very unfrequent in the highlands. No corporal punishment, of any kind, was inflicted. The memory of an affront of this sort would remain, for ages, in a family; and they would seize every opportunity to be revenged, unless it came immediately from the hands of the chief himself: in that case it was taken, rather as a fatherly correction, than a legal punishment for offences.

*) High on Cormul's rock, an oak flamed to the wind. The grey skirts of mist are rolled around; thither strode the king in his wrath.

*) This rock of Cormul is often mentioned in the preceding part of the poem. It was on it Fingal and Ossian stood to view the battle. The custom of retiring from the army, on the night prior to their engaging in battle, was universal among the kings of the Caledonians. — Tremor, the most renowned of the ancestors of Fingal, is mentioned as the first who instituted this custom. Succeeding bards attributed it to a hero of a latter period. — — In an old poem, which begins with *Mac-Arcath nan ceud fról*, this custom of retiring from the army, before an engagement, is numbered, among the wise institutions of Fergus, the son of Arc or Arcath, the first king of Scots. I shall here translate the passage; in some other note I may, probably, give all that remains of the poem. *Fergus of the hundred streams, son of Arcath, who fought of old: thou didst first retire at night: when the foe rolled before thee, in echoing fields. Nor bending in rest is the king: he gathers battles in his soul. Fly, son of the stranger, with morn he shall rush abroad. When, or by whom, this poem was writ, is uncertain.*

It

wrath. Distant from the host he always lay, when battle burnt within his soul. On two spears hung his shield on high; the gleaming sign of death; that shield, which he was wont to strike, by night, before he rushed to war. — It was then his warriors knew, when the king was to lead in strife; for never was this buckler heard, till Fingal's wrath arose. — Unequal were his steps on high, as he shone in the beam of the oak; he was dreadful as the form of the spirit of night, when he cloaths, on hills, his wild gestures with mist, and, issuing forth, on the troubled ocean, mounts the car of winds.

Nor settled, from the storm, is Erin's sea of war; they glittered, beneath the moon, and, low-humming, still rolled on the field. — Alone are the steps of Cathmor, before them on the heath; he hung forward, with all his arms, on Morven's flying host. Now had he come to the mossy cave, where Fillan lay in night. One tree was bent above the stream, which

It has much of the spirit of the ancient composition of the Scottish bards; and seems to be a close imitation of the manner of Ossian.

which glittered over the rock. — There shone to the moon the broken shield of Clatho's son; and near it, on grass, lay hairy-footed Bran *). He had missed the chief on Mora, and

- *) This circumstance, concerning Bran, the favourite dog of Fingal, is perhaps, one of the most affecting passages in the poem. I remember to have met with an old poem, composed long after the time of Ossian, wherein a story of this sort is very happily introduced. In one of the invasions of the Danes, Ullin-clundu, a considerable chief, on the western coast of Scotland, was killed in a rencounter with a flying party of the enemy, who had landed, at no great distance, from the place of his residence. The few followers who attended him, were also slain. — The young wife of Ullin-clundu, who had not heard of his fall, fearing the worst, on account of his long delay, alarmed the rest of his tribe, who went in search of him along the shore. They did not find him; and the beautiful widow became disconsolate. At length he was discovered, by means of his dog, who sat on a rock beside the body, for some days. — The poem is not just now in my hands; otherwise its poetical merit might induce me, to present the reader with a translation of it. The stanza

and searched him along the wind. He thought that the blue-eyed hunter slept; he lay upon his shield. No blast came over the heath, unknown to bounding Bran.

Cathmor saw the white-breasted dog; he saw the broken shield. Darkness is blown back on his soul; he remembers the falling away of the people. They come, a stream; are rolled away; another race succeeds. — “But some mark the fields, as they pass, with their own mighty names. The heath, thro’ dark-brown years, is theirs; some blue stream winds to their fame. — Of these be the chief of Atha, when he lays him down on earth. Often may the voice of future times meet

stanza concerning the dog, whose name was Du-chos, or *Blackfoot*, is very descriptive.

“Dark-sided Du-chos! feet of wind! cold is thy seat on rocks. He (the dog) sees the roe; his ears are high; and half he bounds away. He looks around: but Ullin sleeps; he droops again his head. The winds come past; dark Du-chos thinks, that Ullin’s voice is there. But still he beholds him silent, laid amidst the waving heath. Dark-sided Du-chos, his voice no more shall send thee over the heath!”

meet Cathmor in the air: when he strides from wind to wind, or folds himself in the wing of a storm."

Green Erin gathered round the king, to hear the voice of his power. Their joyful faces bend, unequal, forward, in the light of the oak. They who were terrible, were removed: Lubar *) winds again in their host. Cathmor was that beam from heaven, which shone, when his people were dark. He was honoured

*) In order to illustrate this passage, it is proper to lay before the reader the scene of the two preceding battles. Between the hills of Mora and Lona lay the plain of Moi-lena, thro' which ran the river Lubar. The first battle, wherein Gaul, the son of Morni, commanded on the Caledonian side, was fought on the banks of Lubar. As there was little advantage obtained, on either side, the armies, after the battle, retained their former positions.

In the second battle, wherein Fillan commanded, the Irish, after the fall of Foldath, were driven up the hill of Lona: but, upon the coming of Cathmor to their aid, they regained their former situation, and drove back the Caledonians, in their turn: so that *Lubar* winded again in their host.

ed in the midst. Their souls rose trembling
around. The king alone no gladness shewed;
no stranger he to war.

Why is the king so sad? said Malthos eag-
le-eyed. — Remains there a foe at Lubar?
Lives there among them, who can lift the
spear? Not so peaceful was thy father, Borbar-
dúthul *), sovereign of spears. His rage was
a fire

*) Borbar-dúthul, the father of Cathmor, was the
brother of that Colc-ulla, who is said, in the
beginning of the fourth book, to have rebelled
against Cormac king of Ireland. Borbar-duthul
seems to have retained all the prejudice of his
family against the succession of the posterity of
Conar, on the Irish throne. From this short
episode we learn some facts, which tend to throw
light on the history of the times. It appears,
that, when Swaran invaded Ireland, he was on-
ly opposed by the Caël, who possessed Ulster,
and the north of that island. Calmar, the son
of Matha, whose gallant behaviour and death
are related in the third book of Fingal, was
the only chief of the race of the Fir-bolg, that
joined the Caël, or Irish Caledonians, during
the invasion of Swaran. The indecent joy,
N which

a fire that always burned: his joy over fallen foes was great. Three days feasted the grey-haired hero, when he heard that Calmar fell: Calmar, who aided the race of Ullin, from Lara of the streams. — Often did he feel, with his hands, the steel which, they said, had pierced his foe. He felt it with his hands, for Borbar-dúthul's eyes had failed. — Yet was the king a sun to his friends; a gale to lift their branches round. Joy was around him in his halls: he loved the sons of Bolga. His name remains in Atha, like the awful memory of ghosts, whose presence was terrible, but they blew the storm away. — Now let the voices *) of Erin raise the soul of the king; he that shone when war was dark, and laid the
migh-

which Borbar-duthul expressed, upon the death of Calmar, is well suited with that spirit of revenge, which subsisted, universally, in every country where the feudal system was established. — It would appear, that some person had carried to Borbar-duthul that weapon, with which, it was pretended, Calmar had been killed.

*) *The voices of Erin*, a poetical expression for the bards of Ireland.

mighty low. — Fonar, from that grey-browed rock, pour the tale of other times: pour it on wide-skirted Erin, as it settles round.

To me, said Cathmor, no song shall rise: nor Fonar sit on the rock of Lubar. The mighty there are laid low. Disturb not their rushing ghosts. Far, Malthos, far remove the sound of Erin's song. I rejoice not over the foe, when he ceases to lift the spear. With morning we pour our strength abroad. Fingal is wakened on his ecchoing hill.

Like waves, blown back by sudden winds, Erin retired, at the voice of the king. Deep-rolled into the field of night, they spread their humming tribes: Beneath his own tree, at intervals, each *) bard sat down with his harp. They

*) Not only the kings, but every petty chief, had their bards attending them, in the field, in the days of Ossian; and these bards, in proportion to the power of the chiefs, who retained them, had a number of inferior bards in their train. Upon solemn occasions, all the bards, in the army, would join in one chorus; either when they celebrated their victories, or lamented the

They raised the song, and touched the string:
each to the chief he loved. — Before a
burning oak Sul-malla touched, at times, the
harp.

death of a person, worthy and renowned, slain
in the war. The words were of the composition
of the arch-bard, retained by the king himself,
who generally attained to that high office, on ac-
count of his superior genius for poetry. As the
persons of the bards were sacred, and the emo-
luments of their office considerable, the order,
in succeeding times, became very numerous and
intolent. It would appear, that, after the in-
troduction of Christianity, some served in the
double capacity of bards and clergymen. It was,
from this circumstance, that they had the name
of *Chlére*, which is, probably, derived from the
latin Clericus. The *Chlére*, be their name de-
rived from what it will, became, at last, a pub-
lic nuisance: for, taking advantage of their sa-
cred character, they went about, in great bodies,
and lived, at discretion, in the houses of the
chiefs; till another party, of the same order,
drove them away by mere dint of satire. Some
of the indelicate disputes of these worthy poeti-
cal combatants are handed down, by tradition,
and shew, how much the bards, at last, abused
the privileges, which the admiration of their
coun-

harp. She touched the harp, and heard, between, the breezes in her hair. — In darkness near, lay the king of Atha, beneath an aged tree. The beam of the oak was turned from him; he saw the maid, but was not seen. His soul poured forth, in secret, when he beheld her tearful eye. — But battle is before thee, son of Borbar-dúthul.

Amidst the harp, at intervals, she listened whether the warriors slept. Her soul was up; she longed, in secret, to pour her own sad song. — The field is silent. On their wings, the blasts of night retire. The bards had ceased; and meteors came, red-winding with their ghosts. — The sky grew dark: the forms of the dead were blended with the clouds.
But

countrymen had conferred on the order. — It was this insolent behaviour that induced the chiefs to retrench their number, and to take away those privileges which they were no longer worthy to enjoy. Their indolence, and disposition to lampoon, extinguished all the poetical fervour, which distinguished their predecessors, and makes us the less regret the extinction of the order.

But heedless bends the daughter of Connor,
 over the decaying flame. Thou wert alone in
 her soul, car-borne chief of Atha. She raised
 the voice of the song, and touched the harp
 between.

*) Clun-galo came; she missed the maid,
 — Where art thou, beam of light? Hunters,
 from the mossy rock, saw you the blue-eyed
 fair? — Are her steps on grassy Lumon,
 near the bed of roes? — Ah me! I behold
 her bow in the hall. Where art thou, beam
 of light?

**) Cease, love of Connor, cease; I hear
 thee not on the ridgy heath. My eye is turned
 to the king, whose path is terrible in war.
 He, for whom my soul is up, in the season of
 my

*) Clun-galo, *white knee*, the wife of Connor,
 king of Inis-huna, and the mother of Sul-mal-
 la. She is here represented, as missing her
 daughter, after she had fled with Cathmor. This
 song is very beautiful in the original. The ex-
 pressive cadences of the measure are inimitably
 suited to the situation of the mind of Sul-malla.

**) Sul-malla replies to the supposed questions of her
 mother. Towards the middle of this paragraph
 she

my rest. — Deep-bosomed in war he stands,
 he beholds me not from his cloud. — Why,
 sun of Sul-malla, dost thou not look forth?
 — I dwell in darkness here; wide over me
 flies the shadowy mist. Filled with dew are
 my locks: look thou from thy cloud, o sun
 of Sul-malla's soul. — * * * * *
 * * *

She calls Cathmor *the sun of her soul*, and continues the metaphor throughout. Those, who deliver this song down by tradition, say that there is a part of the original lost. — This book ends, we may suppose, about the middle of the third night, from the opening of the poem.

myself — Deep-bosomed in war-hearts,
 he beholds me not from his stand — Why,
 son of Salmata, dost thou not look forth?
 — I dwell in darkness here; wide over me
 the shadowy night is filled with dew-are
 thy locks: look thou from thy cloud, O son
 of Salmata's land. — * * * *

The call came not the first of her kind, and could
 meet the warrior throughout — Told, who
 set the day down by reason of the
 the 24 part of the original day — The
 book ends in a new world, about the middle
 of the last night, from the opening of the
 poem.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SEVENTH.

ARGUMENT to Book VII.

This book begins, about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. The poet describes a kind of mist, which rose, by night, from the lake of Lego, and was the usual residence of the souls of the dead, during the interval between their decease and the funeral song. The appearance of the ghost of Fillan, above the cave where his body lay. His voice comes to Fingal, on the rock of Cormul. The king strikes the shield of Trenmor, which was an infallible sign of his appearing in arms himself. The extraordinary effect of the sound of the shield, Sul-malla, starting from sleep, awakes Cathmor. Their affecting discourse. She insists with him, to sue for peace; he resolves to continue the war. He directs her to retire to the neighbouring valley of Lona, which was the residence of an old Druid, until the battle of the next day should be over. He awakes his army with the sound of his shield. The shield described. Fonnar, the bard, at the desire of Cathmor, relates the first settlement of the Firbolg in Ireland, under their leader Larthon. Morning comes. Sul-malla retires to the valley of Lona. A Lyric song concludes the book.

TEMO.

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK SEVENTH.

*) **F**rom the wood-skirted waters of Lego,
ascend, at times, grey-bosomed mists,
when the gates of the west are closed on the
sun's

*) No poet departs less from his subject than Ossian.
No far-fetched ornaments are introduced; the
episodes rise from, and are indeed essential to,
the story of the poem. Even his lyric songs,
where he most indulges the extravagance of fan-
cy, naturally spring from his subject. Their pro-
priety and connection with the rest of the poem,
shew that the Celtic bard was guided by judg-
ment, amidst the wildest flights of imagination.
It is a common supposition among mankind, that
a ge-

sun's eagle-eye. Wide, over Lara's stream, is poured the vapour dark and deep: the moon, like a dim shield, is swimming thro' its folds. With this, clothe the spirits of old their sudden

a genius for poetry and sound sense seldom center in the same person. The observation is far from being just; for true genius and judgment must be inseparable. The wild flights of fancy, without the guidance of judgment, are, as Horace observes, like the dreams of a sick man, irksome and confused. Fools can never write good poems. A warm imagination, it is true, domineers over a common portion of sense; and hence it is that so few have succeeded in the poetical way. But when an uncommon strength of judgment, and a glowing fancy, are properly tempered together, they, and they only, produce genuine poetry.

The present book is not the least interesting part of Temora. The awful images, with which it opens, are calculated to prepare the mind for the solemn scenes which are to follow. Ossian, always, throws an air of consequence on every circumstance which relates to Fingal. The very sound of his shield produces extraordinary effects; and these are heightened, one above another, in

den gestures on the wind, when they stride,
 from blast to blast, along the dusky face of
 the night. Often, blended with the gale, to
 some

in a beautiful climax. The distress of Sul-malla,
 and her conference with Cathmor, are very af-
 fecting. The description of his shield is a curi-
 ous piece of antiquity; and is a proof of the
 early knowledge of navigation among the inha-
 bitants of Britain and Ireland. Ossian, in short,
 throughout this book, is often sublime, and al-
 ways pathetic.

Lego, so often mentioned by Ossian, was a
 lake, in Connaught, in which the river Lara
 emptied itself. On the banks of this lake dwelt
 Branno, the father-in-law of Ossian, whom the
 poet often visited, before and after the death of
 Evir-allin. This circumstance, perhaps, occasion-
 ed the partiality, with which he always men-
 tions Lego and Lara, and accounts for his draw-
 ing so many of his images from them. The
 signification of Lego, is, *the lake of disease*, pro-
 bably so called, on account of the morasses
 which surrounded it.

As the mist, which rose from the lake of
 Lego, occasioned diseases and death, the bards
 feign-

some warrior's grave, they roll the mist, a grey dwelling to his ghost, until the songs arise.

A sound came from the desert; the rushing course of Conar in winds. He poured his deep mist on Fillan, at blue-winding Lubar. — Dark and mournful sat the ghost, bending in his grey ridge of smoak. The blast, at times, rolled him together: but the lovely form

feigned, as here, that it was the residence of the ghosts of the deceased, during the interval between their death and the pronouncing of the funeral elegy over their tombs; for it was not allowable, without that ceremony was performed, for the spirits of the dead, to mix with their ancestors, *in their airy halls*. It was the business of the spirit of the nearest relation to the deceased, to take the mist of Lego, and pour it over the grave. We find here Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first king of Ireland, according to Ossian, performing this office for Fillan, as it was in the cause of the family of Conar, that that hero was killed. The description of the appearance of the ghost is picturesque and solemn, imposing a still attention to the speech that follows it, which, with great propriety, is short and awful.

form returned again. It returned with flow-bending eyes: and dark winding of locks of mist.

It is *) dark. The sleeping host were still, in the skirts of night. The flame decayed, on the hill of Fingal; the king lay lonely

*) It has been observed, that Ossian takes great delight in describing night-scenes. This, in some measure, is to be attributed to his melancholy disposition, which delighted to dwell upon solemn objects. Even other poets, of a less serious turn than Ossian, have best succeeded in descriptions of this sort. Solemn scenes make the most lasting impressions on the imagination; gay and light objects only touch the surface of the soul, and vanish. The human mind is naturally serious: levity and cheerfulness may be amiable, but they are too often the characteristics of weakness of judgment, and a deplorable shallowness of soul. — The night-descriptions of Ossian were in high repute among succeeding bards. One of them delivered a sentiment, in a distich, more favourable to his taste for poetry, than to his gallantry towards the ladies. I shall here give a translation of it.

“More

ly on his shield. His eyes were half-closed in sleep; the voice of Fillan came. "Sleeps the husband of Clatho? Dwells the father of the fallen in rest? Am I forgot in the folds of darkness; lonely in the season of dreams?"

Why art thou in the midst of my dreams? said Fingal, as, sudden, he rose. Can I forget thee, my son, or thy path of fire in the field? Not such, on the soul of the king, come the deeds of the mighty in arms. They are not there a beam of lightening, which is seen, and is then no more. — I remember thee, o Fillan, and my wrath begins to rise.

The

"More pleasant to me is the night of Cona, dark-streaming from Ossian's harps; more pleasant it is to me, than a white-bosomed dweller between my arms; than a fair-handed daughter of heroes, in the hour of rest."

Tho' tradition is not very satisfactory concerning the history of this poet, it has taken care to inform us, that he was *very old*, when he wrote the distich. He lived (in what age is uncertain) in one of the western isles, and his name was Turloch Ciabhglas, or *Turloch of the grey locks*.

The king took his deathful spear, and struck the deeply-sounding shield: his shield *) that hung high in night, the dismal sign of war.

*) Succeeding bards have recorded many fables, concerning this wonderful shield. They say, that Fingal, in one of his expeditions into Scandinavia, met, in one of the islands of Juteland, with Luno, a celebrated magician. This Luno was the Vulcan of the north, and had made compleat suits of armour for many of the heroes of Scandinavia. One disagreeable circumstance was, that every person who wanted to employ Luno to make armour for him, was obliged to overcome him, at his own magic art. — Fingal, unskilled in spells or enchantments, effected with dint of prowess, what others failed in, with all their supernatural art. When Luno demanded a trial of skill from Fingal, the king drew his sword, cut off the skirts of the magician's robe, and obliged him, bare as he was, to fly before him. Fingal pursued, but Luno, coming to the sea, by his magic art, walked upon the waves. Fingal pursued him in his ship, and, after a chase of ten days, came up with him, in the isle of Sky, and obliged him to erect a furnace, and make him this shield, and his famous sword, poetically called, *the son of*

war! — Ghosts fled on every side, and rolled their gathered forms on the wind. — Thrice from the winding vale arose the voices of death. The harps *) of the bards, untouched, sound mournful over the hill.

He

Luno. — Such are the strange fictions, which the modern Scotch and Irish bards have formed on the original of Ossian.

*) It was the opinion of the times, that, on the night preceding the death of a person worthy and renowned, the harps of those bards, who were retained by his family, emitted melancholy sounds. This was attributed, to use Ossian's expression, to *the light touch of ghosts*; who were supposed to have a fore-knowledge of events. The same opinion prevailed long in the north, and the particular sound was called, *the warning voice of the dead*. *The voice of deaths*, mentioned in the preceding sentence, was of a different kind. Each person was supposed to have an attendant spirit, who assumed his form and voice, on the night preceding his death, and appeared, to some, in the attitude, in which the person was to die. The VOICES OF DEATH were the foreboding shrieks of those spirits.

He struck again the shield: battles rose in the dreams of his host. The wide-tumbling strife is gleaming over their souls. Blue-shielded kings descend to war. Backward-looking armies fly; and mighty deeds are half-hid, in the bright gleams of steel.

But when the third found arose; deer started from the clefts of their rocks. The screams of fowl are heard, in the desert, as each flew, frightened, on his blast. — The sons of Albin half-rose, and half-assumed their spears. — But silence rolled back on the host: they knew the shield of the king. Sleep returned to their eyes: the field was dark and still.

*) No sleep was thine in darkness, blue-eyed daughter of Connor! Sul-malla heard the

*) A bard, several ages more modern than Ossian, was so sensible of the beauty of this passage, as to give a close imitation of it, in a poem, concerning the great actions of Kenneth Mac-Alpin, king of Scotland, against the Picts. As the poem is long, I shall only give here the story of it, with a translation of that paragraph, which bears the nearest resemblance to the pas-

the dreadful shield, and rose, amidst the night.

— Her steps are towards the king of Atha.

— Can danger shake his daring soul! In
doubt

sage of Temora just now before me. When Keneth was making preparations for that war, which terminated in the subversion of the Pictish kingdom: Flathal, his sister, had demanded permission from him, of attending him in the expedition; in order to have a share in revenging the death of her father Alpin, who had been barbarously murdered by the Picts. The king, tho' he, perhaps, approved of the gallant disposition of his sister, refused, on account of her sex, to grant her request. The heroine, however, dressed herself in the habit of a young warrior; and, in that disguise, attended the army, and performed many gallant exploits. On the night preceding the final overthrow of the Picts, Keneth, as was the custom among the kings of Scots, retired to a hill, without the verge of the camp, to meditate on the dispositions, he was to make in the approaching battle. Flathal, who was anxious about the safety of her brother, went, privately, to the top of an adjoining rock, and kept watch there, to prevent his being surprized by the enemy. — Keneth fell asleep, in his arms; and Flathal observed a body

doubt: she stands, with bending eyes. Heaven
burns with all its stars;

Again

dy of the Picts surrounding the hill, whereon
the king lay. — The sequel of the story may
be gathered from the words of the bard.

“Her eyes, like stars, roll over the plain.
She trembled for Alpin’s race. She saw the
gleaming foe. Her steps arose: she stopt. —

“Why should he know of Flathal? he the king
of men! — But hark! the sound is high. —

It is but the wind of night, lone whistling in
my locks. — I hear the echoing shields!”

— Her spear fell from her hand. The lofty
rock resounds. — He rose, a gathered cloud.

“Who wakes Conad of Albin, in the midst
of his secret hill? I heard the soft voice of Fla-
thal. Why, maid, dost thou shine in war? The
daughters roll their blue eyes, by the streams.
No field of blood is theirs.

“Alpin of Albin was mine, the father of
Flathal of harps. He is low, mighty Conad,
and my soul is fire. Could Flathal, by the se-
cret stream, behold the blood of her foes? I am
a young eagle, on Dura, king of Drumalbin of
winds.” —

Again the shield resounds ! — She rushed. — She stopt. — Her voice half-rose. It failed. — She saw him, amidst his arms, that gleamed to heaven's fire. She saw him dim in his locks, that rose to nightly wind. — Away, for fear, she turned her steps. — “Why should the king of Erin awake ? Thou art not a dream to his rest, daughter of Inis-huna.”

More dreadful rung the shield. Sul-malla starts. Her helmet falls. Loud-ecchoed Lubar's rock, as over it rolled the steel. — Bursting from the dreams of night, Cathmor half-rose, beneath his tree. He saw the form of the maid, above him, on the rock. A red star, with twinkling beam, looked down thro' her floating hair.

Who

In the sequel of the piece, the bard does not imitate Ossian, and his poem is so much the worse for it. — Keneth, with his sister's assistance, forced his way thro' the advanced parties of the enemy, and rejoined his own army. The bard has given a catalogue of the Scotch tribes, as they marched to battle; but, as he did not live near the time of Keneth, his accounts are to be little depended on.

*) Who comes thro' night to Cathmor, in the dark season of his dreams? Bring'st thou ought of war? Who art thou, son of night? — Stand'st thou before me, a form of the times of old? A voice from the fold of a cloud, to warn me of Erin's danger?

Nor traveller of night am I, nor voice from folded cloud: but I warn thee of the danger of Erin. Dost thou hear that sound? It is not the feeble, king of Atha, that rolls his signs on night.

Let the warrior roll his signs; to Cathmor they are the sound of harps. My joy is great, voice of night, and burns over all my thoughts. This is the music of kings, on lonely hills, by night;

*) The rapid manner of Ossian does not often allow him to mark the speeches with the names of the persons who speak them. To prevent the obscurity which this might occasion, I have, sometimes, used the freedom to do it in the translation. In the present dialogue between Cathmor and Sul-malla, the speeches are so much marked with the characters of the speakers, that no interpolation is necessary to distinguish them from one another.

night; when they light their daring souls, the
sons of mighty deeds! The feeble dwell alone,
in the valley of the breeze; where mists lift
their morning-skirts, from the blue-winding
streams.

Not feeble, thou leader of heroes, were
they, the fathers of my race. They dwelt in
the darkness of battle; in their distant lands.
Yet delights not my soul, in the signs of death!
—— He *), who never yields, comes forth:
Awake the bard of peace!

Like a rock with its trickling waters, stood
Cathmor in his tears. Her voice came, a bree-
ze, on his soul, and waked the memory of her
land; where she dwelt by her peaceful streams,
before he came to the war of Connor.

Daughter

*) Fingal is said to have never been overcome in
battle. From this proceeded that title of ho-
nour, which is always bestowed on him in tradi-
tion, *Fion-ghall na buai*, FINGAL OF VICTORIES.
In a poem, just now in my hands, which cele-
brates some of the great actions of Arthur the
famous British hero, that appellation is often
bestowed on him. —— The poem, from the
phraseology, appears to be ancient; and is, per-
haps, tho' that is not mentioned, a translation
from the Welsh language.

Daughter of strangers, he said; (she trembling turned away) long have I marked in her armour, the young pine of Inis-hu-na. — But my soul, I said, is folded in a storm. Why should that beam arise, till my steps return in peace? Have I been pale in thy presence, when thou bidst me to fear the king? — The time of danger, o maid, is the season of my soul; for then it swells, a mighty stream, and rolls me on the foe.

Beneath the moss-covered rocks of Lona, near his own winding stream; grey in his locks of age, dwells Clonmal *) king of harps. Above him is his echoing oak, and the dun bounding of roes. The noise **) of our strife reaches his ear, as he bends in the thoughts

*) Claon-mal, crooked eye-brow. From the retired life of this person, it appears, that he was of the order of the Druids; which supposition is not, at all, invalidated by the appellation of king of harps, here bestowed on him: for all agree, that the Bards were of the number of the Druids originally.

**) By this circumstance, the poet insinuates, that the valley of Lona was very near the field of

thoughts of years. There let thy rest be, Sul-malla, until our battle cease. Until I return, in my arms, from the skirts of the evening-mist, that rises, on Lona, round the dwelling of my love.

A light fell on the soul of the maid; it rose kindled before the king. She turned her face to Cathmor; her locks are struggling with winds. Sooner *) shall the eagle of heaven be

battle. In this indirect manner of narration, consists the great difference between poetical and historical narration.

*) In after ages, the allusions of the bards, to particular passages of the works of Ossian, were very numerous. I have met with a poem, which was writ three centuries ago, in which the bard recommends, to a lady of his own times, the behaviour of Sul-malla, in this place. The poem has little to recommend it, excepting the passage, of which I am to give a translation here. The bards, when they alluded to the works of Ossian, seem to have caught some portion of his fire: upon other occasions, their compositions are little more than a group of epithets reduced into measure. Only their poems, upon martial subject, fall under this censure. Their love-

be torn, from the stream of his roaring wind,
when he sees the dun prey, before him, the
young

love-sonnets, and pastoral verses, are far from wanting their beauties: but a great deal of these depend upon a certain *curiosa felicitas* of expression in the original; so that they would appear greatly to their disadvantage in another language. What the modern bards are most insupportable in, are their nauseous panegyrics upon their patrons. We see, in them, a petty tyrant, whose name was never heard, beyond the contracted limits of his own valley, stalking forth in all the trappings of a finished hero. From their frequent allusions, however, to the entertainments which he gave, and the *strength of his cups*, we may easily guess, from whence proceeded the praise of an indolent and effeminate race of men: for the bards, from the great court paid, originally, to their order, became, at last, the most flagitious and dispirited of all mortals. Their compositions, therefore, on this side of a certain period, are dull and trivial to the highest degree. By lavishing their praises upon unworthy objects, their panegyrics became common and little regarded; they were thrust out of the houses of the chiefs, and wandered about, from tribe to tribe, in the double capacity of poet

young sons of the bounding roe, than thou,
 o Cathmor, be turned from the strife of re-
 nown. — Soon may I see thee, warrior,
 from

poet and harper. Galled with this usage, they be-
 took themselves to satire and lampoon, so that
 the compositions of the bards, for more than a
 century back, are almost altogether of the sar-
 castical kind. In this they succeeded well; for as
 there is no language more copious than the Ga-
 lic, so there is scarcely any equally adapted to
 those quaint turns of expression which belong to
 satire. — Tho' the chiefs disregarded the lam-
 poons of the bards, the vulgar, out of mere
 fear, received them into their habitations, enter-
 tained them, as well as their circumstances
 would allow, and kept existing, for some years,
 an order, which, by their own mismanagement,
 had deservedly fallen into contempt.

To return to the old poem, which gave oc-
 casion to this note. It is an address to the wife
 of a chief, upon the departure of her husband
 to war. The passage, which alludes to Sul-mal-
 la, is this:

“Why art thou mournful on rocks; or lift-
 ing thine eyes on waves? His ship has bounded
 to-

from the skirts of the evening-mist, when it is rolled around me, on Lona of the streams. While yet thou art distant far, strike, Cathmor, strike the shield, that joy may return to my darkned soul, as I lean on the mossy rock. But if thou should fall: — I am in the land of strangers; — O send thy voice, from thy cloud, to the maid of Inis-huna.

Young branch of green-headed Lumon, why dost thou shake in the storm? Often has Cathmor returned, from darkly-rolling wars. The darts of death are but hail to me; they have often bounded from my shield. I have risen brightned from battle, like a meteor from a stormy cloud. Return not, fair beam, from thy vale, when the roar of battle grows. Then might the foe escape, as from my fathers of old.

They
towards battle. His joy is in the murmur of fields. Look to the beams of old, to the virgins of Ossian of harps. Sul-malla keeps not her eagle, from the field of blood. She would not tear her eagle, from the sounding course of renown."

They told to Son-mor *), of Clunar **), slain by Cormac the giver of shells. Three days darkned Son-mor, over his brother's fall. — His spouse beheld the silent king, and foresaw his steps to war. She prepared the bow, in secret, to attend her blue-shielded hero. To her dwelt darkness, at Atha, when the warrior moved to his fields. — From their hundred streams, by night, poured down the fons of Alnecma. They had heard the shield of the king, and their rage arose. In clanging arms, they moved along, towards Ulin the land of groves. Son-mor struck his shield, at times, the leader of the war.

Far

*) *Són-mor, tall handsome man.* He was the father of Borbar-dúthul, chief of Atha, and grandfather to Cathmor himself. The propriety of this episode is evident. But, tho' it appears here to be only introduced as an example to Sul-malla; the poet probably had another design in view, which was further to illustrate the antiquity of the quarrel between the Firbolg and Caël.

**) *Cluan-er, man of the field.* This chief was killed in battle by Cormac Mac-Conar, king of Ireland, the father of Roscrana, the first wife of Fingal. The story is alluded to in other poems.

Far behind followed Sul-allin*), over the streamy hills. She was a light on the mountain, when they crossed the vale below. Her steps were stately on the vale, when they rose on the mossy hill. — She feared to approach the king, who left her in Atha of hinds. But when the roar of battle rose; when host was rolled on host; when Son-mor burnt, like the fire of heaven in clouds: with her spreading hair came Sul-allin; for she trembled for her king. — He stopt the rushing strife, to save the love of heroes. — The foe fled by night; Clunar slept without his blood; the blood which ought to be poured upon the warrior's tomb.

Nor rose the rage of Son-mor, but his days were dark and slow. Sul-allin wandered, by her grey streams, with her tearful eyes. Often did she look, on the hero, when he was folded in his thoughts. But she shrunk from his eyes, and turned her lone steps away. — Battles rose, like a tempest, and drove the mist from his soul. He beheld, with joy, her steps in the hall, and the white rising of her hands on the harp.

*) In

*) Suil-allin, *beautiful eye*, the wife of Son-mor.

*) In his arms strode the chief of Atha,
 to where his shield hung, high, in night:
 high on a mossy bough, over Lubar's streamy
 roar.

*) The poet returns to his subject. The description of the shield of Cathmor is valuable, on account of the light it throws on the progress of arts in those early times. Those who draw their ideas of remote antiquity from their observations on the manners of modern savage nations, will have no high opinion of the workmanship of Cathmor's shield. To remove some part of their prejudice, I shall only observe, that the Belgæ of Britain, who were the ancestors of the Firbolg, were a commercial people; and commerce, we might prove, from many shining examples of our own times, is the proper inlet of arts and sciences, and all that exalts the human mind. To avoid multiplying notes, I shall give here the signification of the names of the stars, engraved on the shield. Cean-mathon, *head of the bear*. Col - derna, *flant and sharp beam*. Ul - oicho, *ruler of night*. Cathlin, *beam of the wave*. Reul - durash, *star of the twilight*. Berthin, *fire of the bill*. Ton-théna, *meteor of the waves*. These etymologies, excepting that of Cean-mathon, are pretty exact. Of it I am not so certain; for it is not very proba

roar. Seven bosses rose on the shield; the seven voices of the king, which his warriors received, from the wind, and marked over all their tribes.

On each boss is placed a star of night: Canmathon with beams unshorn; Col-derna rising from a cloud; Uloicho robed in mist; and the soft beam of Cathlin glittering on a rock. Fair-gleaming on its own blue wave, Reldurath half-sinks its western light. The red eye of Berthin looks, through a grove, on the slow-moving hunter, as he returns, through showery night, with the spoils of the bounding roe. — Wide, in the midst, arose the cloudless beams of Ton-théna; Ton-théna which looked, by night, on the course of the sea-tossed Larthon. Larthon, the first of Bolga's race, who travelled on the winds *). — White-bosomed spread

probable, that the Firbolg had distinguished a constellation, so very early as the days of Larthon, by the name of the bear.

*) *To travel on the winds*, a poetical expression for sailing.

spread the sails of the king, towards streamy
Inis-fail; dun night was rolled before him,
with its skirts of mist. The winds were chan-
geful in heaven, and rolled him from wave to
wave. — Then rose the fiery-haired Ton-
théna, and laughed from her parted cloud.
Larthon *) rejoiced at the guiding beam, as it
faint-gleamed on the tumbling waters.

Beneath

*) Larthon is compounded of *Lear*, sea, and *thon*,
wave. This name was given to the chief of
the first colony of the Firbolg, who settled in
Ireland, on account of his knowledge in navi-
gation. A part of an old poem is still extant,
concerning this hero. The author of it, prob-
ably, took the hint from the episode in this
book, relating to the first discovery of Ireland
by Larthon. It abounds with those romantic
fables of giants and magicians, which distinguish
the compositions of the less ancient bards. The
descriptions, contained in it, are ingenious and
proportionable to the magnitude of the persons
introduced; but, being unnatural, they are
insipid and tedious. Had the bard kept within
the bounds of probability, his genius was far
from being contemptible. The exordium of his
poem is not destitute of merit; but it is the
on-

Beneath the spear of Cathmor, awaked
that voice which awakes the bards. They came,
dark-winding, from every side; each, with the
sound of his harp. Before them rejoiced the
king, as the traveller, in the day of the sun;
when he hears, far-rolling around, the mur-
mur

only part of it, that I think worthy of being
presented to the reader.

“Who first sent the black ship, thro’ ocean,
like a whale thro’ the bursting of foam? —
Look, from thy darkness, on Cronath, Ossian
of the harps of old! — Send thy light on
the blue-rolling waters, that I may behold the
king. — I see him dark in his own shell of
oak! sea-tossed Lathon, thy soul is fire. —
It is careless as the wind of thy sails; as the
wave that rolls by thy side. But the silent green
isle is before thee, with its sons, who are tall
as woody Lumon: Lumon which sends, from
its top, a thousand streams, white-wandering
down its sides.” —

It may, perhaps, be for the credit of this
bard, to translate no more of this poem, for
the continuation of his description of the Irish
giants betrays his want of judgment.

mur of mossy streams; streams that burst, in the desert, from the rock of roes.

Why, said Fonar, hear we the voice of the king, in the season of his rest? Were the dim forms of thy fathers bending in thy dreams? Perhaps they stand on that cloud, and wait for Fonar's song; often they come to the fields, where their sons are to lift the spear. — Or shall our voice arise for him who lifts the spear no more; he that consumed the field, from Moma of the groves?

Not forgot is that cloud in war, bard of other times. High shall his tomb rise, on Moi-lena, the dwelling of renown. But, now, roll back my soul to the times of my fathers: to the years when first they rose, on Inis-huna's waves. Nor alone pleasant to Cathmor is the remembrance of wood-covered Lumon. — Lumon the land of streams, the dwelling of white-bosomed maids.

*) Lumon of foamy streams, thou risest on Fonar's soul! Thy sun is on thy side, on the
rocks

*) Lumon, as I have remarked in a preceding note, was a hill, in Inis-huna, near the residence of
Sul-

rocks of thy bending trees. The dun roe is seen from thy furze; the deer lifts his branchy head; for he sees, at times, the hound, on the half-covered heath. Slow, on the vale, are the steps of maids; the white-armed daughters of the bow: they lift their blue eyes to the hill, from amidst their wandering locks. — Not there is the stride of Larthon, chief of Inis-huna. He mounts the wave on his own dark oak, in Cluba's ridgy bay. That oak which he cut from Lumon, to bound along the sea. The maids turn their eyes away, lest the king should be lowly-laid; for never had they seen a ship, dark rider of the wave!

Now he dares to call the winds, and to mix with the mist of ocean. Blue Inis-fail
rose,

Sul-malla. This episode has an immediate connection with what is said of Larthon, in the description of Cathmor's shield. We have there hinted to us only Larthon's first voyage to Ireland; here his story is related, at large, and a curious description of his invention of ship-building. This concise, but expressive, episode has been much admired in the original. Its brevity is remarkably suited to the hurry of the occasion.

rose, in smoak; but dark-skirted night came down. The sons of Bolga feared. The fiery-haired Ton-théna rose. Culbin's bay received the ship, in the bosom of its ecchoing woods. There, issued a stream, from Duthuma's horrid cave; where spirits gleamed, at times, with their half-finished forms.

Dreams descended on Larthon: he saw seven spirits of his fathers. He heard their half-formed words, and dimly beheld the times to come. He beheld the kings of Atha, the sons of future days. They led their hosts, along the field, like ridges of mist, which winds pour, in autumn, over Atha of the groves.

Larthon raised the hall of Samla *), to the soft sound of the harp. He went forth to the roes of Erin, to their wonted streams. Nor did he forget green-headed Lumon; he often bounded over his seas, to where white-handed Flathal **) looked from the hill of roes. Lumon of the foamy streams, thou risest on Fonnar's soul.

The

*) Samla, *apparitions*, so called from the vision of Larthon, concerning his posterity.

**) Flathal, *heavenly, exquisitely beautiful*. She was the wife of Larthon.

The beam awaked in the east. The misty heads of the mountains rose. Valleys shew, on every side, the grey - winding of their streams. His host heard the shield of Cathmor: at once they rose around; like a crowded sea, when first it feels the wings of the wind. The waves know not whither to roll; they lift their troubled heads.

Sad and slow retired Sul - malla to Lona of the streams. She went — and often turned; her blue eyes rolled in tears. But when she came to the rock, that darkly - covered Lona's vale: she looked, from her bursting soul, on the king; and sunk, at once, behind.

*) Son of Alpin, strike the string. Is there ought of joy in the harp? Pour it then, on the soul of Ossian: it is folded in mist. — I hear thee, o bard, in my night. But cease the lightly - trembling sound. The joy of
grief

*) The original of this lyric ode is one of the most beautiful passages of the poem. The harmony and variety of its versification prove, that the knowledge of music was considerably advanced in the days of Ossian. See the specimen of the original.

grief belongs to Ossian, amidst his dark-brown years.

Green thorn of the hill of ghosts, that shakest thy head to nightly winds! I hear no sound in thee; is there no spirit's windy skirt now rustling in thy leaves? Often are the steps of the dead, in the dark-eddying blasts; when the moon, a dun shield, from the east, is rolled along the sky.

Ullin, Carril and Ryno, voices of the days of old! Let me hear you, in the darkness of Selma, and awake the soul of songs. — I hear you not, ye children of music, in what hall of the clouds is your rest? Do you touch the shadowy harp, robed with morning-mist, where the sun comes founding forth from his green-headed waves?

TEMORA:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

THEMOR A:

AN
EPIC POEM

BOOK EIGHTH

ARGUMENT to Book VIII.

The fourth morning, from the opening of the poem, comes on. Fingal, still continuing in the place, to which he had retired on the preceding night, is seen, at intervals, thro' the mist, which covered the rock of Cormul. The descent of the king is described. He orders Gaul, Dermid, and Carril the bard, to go to the valley of Cluna, and conduct, from thence, to the Caledonian army, Ferad-artho, the son of Cairbre, the only person remaining of the family of Conar, the first king of Ireland. — The king takes the command of the army, and prepares for battle. Marching towards the enemy, he comes to the cave of Lubar, where the body of Fillan lay. Upon seeing his dog Bran, who lay at the entrance of the cave, his grief returns. — Cathmor arranges the army of the Fir-bolg in order of battle. The appearance of that hero. The general conflict is described. The actions of Fingal and Cathmor. A storm. The total rout of the Fir-bolg. The two kings engage, in a column of mist, on the banks of Lubar. Their attitude

ARGUMENT to Book VIII.

tude and conference after the combat. The death of

Cathmor. — Fingal resigns *the spear of Trenmor* to

Ossian. The ceremonies observed on that occasion. —

The spirit of Cathmor appears to Sul-malla, in the

valley of Lona. Her sorrow. — Evening comes on.

A feast is prepared. — The coming of Ferad-artho is

announced by the songs of a hundred bards. — The

poem closes, with a speech of Fingal.

TEMO.

T E M O R A:

AN

EPIC POEM.

BOOK EIGHTH.

*) **A**s when the wintry winds have seized
 the waves of the mountain-lake, have
 seized them, in stormy night, and cloathed
 them over with ice; white, to the hunter's
 early

*) In the course of my notes, I have made it more
 my business to explain, than to examine, critically,
 the words of Ossian. The first is my province,
 as the person best acquainted with them, the second
 falls to the share of others. I shall, however, observe,
 that all the precepts, which Aristotle drew from
 Homer, ought not to be applied to the composition
 of a Celtic bard; nor ought the title of the latter
 to the *epopœa* to be
 dis-

early eye, the billows still seem to roll. He turns his ear to the sound of each unequal ridge.

disputed, even if he should differ in some circumstances, from a Greek poet. — Some allowance should be made for the different manners of nations. The genius of the Greeks and Celtæ was extremely dissimilar. The first were lively and loquacious; a manly conciseness of expression distinguished the latter. We find, accordingly, that the compositions of Homer and Ossian are marked with the general and opposite characters of their respective nations; and, consequently, it is improper to compare the *minutiae* of their poems together. There are, however, general rules, in the conduct of an epic poem, which, as they are natural, are, likewise, universal. In these the two poets exactly correspond. This similarity, which could not possibly proceed from imitation, is more decisive, with respect to the grand essentials of the *epopœa*, than all the precepts of Aristotle.

Ossian is now approaching to the grand catastrophe. The preparations he has made, in the preceding book, properly introduce the magnificence of description, with which the present book opens, and tend to shew that the Celtic bard

ge. But each is silent, gleaming, strewn with boughs and tufts of grass, which shake and whistle to the wind, over their grey seats of frost:

bard had more art, in working up his fable, than some of those, who closely imitated the perfect model of Homer. The transition from the pathetic to the sublime is easy and natural. Till the mind is opened, by the first, it scarcely can have an adequate comprehension of the second. The soft and affecting scenes of the seventh book form a sort of contrast to, and consequently heighten, the features of the more grand and terrible images of the eighth.

The simile, with which this book opens, is, perhaps, the longest, and the most minutely descriptive, of any in the works of Ossian. The images of it are only familiar to those who live in a cold and mountainous country. They have often seen a lake suddenly frozen over, and strewed with withered grass, and boughs torn, by winds, from the mountains, which form its banks: but, I believe, few of them would be of the mind of the ancient bard, who preferred these winter-scenes to the irriguous vales of May. — To me, says he, bring back my woods, which strew their leaves on blasts; spread the

frost: — so silent shone to the morning
 the ridges of Morven's host, as each warrior
 looked up from his helmet towards the hill
 of

the lake below, with all its frozen waves. Pleasant is the breeze on the bearded ice; when the moon is broad in heaven, and the spirit of the mountain roars. Roll away the green vales of May; they are thoughts of maids, &c. Such are the words of this winter-poet: but what he afterwards adds, gives us to understand, that those frigid scenes were not his sole delight; for he speaks, with great tenderness, of the oak-lighted hall of the chief; and the strength of the shells, at night, when the course of winds is abroad.

If the simile of a frozen lake aptly illustrates the stillness and silent expectation of an army, lying under arms, waiting for the coming of their king: so the comparison of the sudden rising of waves, around a spirit, is also very expressive of the tumultuous joy of Fingal's army, upon the appearance of that hero. — An ancient bard, sensible of the beauty of this passage, has happily imitated it, in a poem, concerning Kenneth Mac-Alpin, king of Scotland. — I had occasion to quote this piece, in a note in the preceding book. Kenneth had retired private-

of the king; the cloud-covered hill of Fingal, where he strode, in the rolling of mist. At times is the hero seen, greatly dim in all his arms. From thought to thought rolled the war, along his mighty soul.

Now is the coming forth of the king. — First appeared the sword of Luno; the spear half-issuing from a cloud, the shield still dim in mist. But when the stride of the king came abroad, with all his grey, dewy locks in the wind; then rose the shouts of his host over every moving tribe. They gathered, gleaming, round, with all their echoing shields. So rise the green seas round a spirit, that comes down from the squally wind. The traveller hears the sound afar, and lifts his head over the rock. He looks on the troubled bay, and thinks

vately, by night, to a hill in the neighbourhood of his army, and, upon his return, next morning, the bard says, *that he was like the form of a spirit, returning to his secret bay. In the skirt of a blast he stands. The waves lift their roaring heads. Their green backs are quivering round. Rocks echo back their joy.*

thinks he dimly sees the form. The waves sport, unwieldy, round, with all their backs of foam.

Far-distant stood the son of Morni, Duthno's race, and Cona's bard. We stood far-distant; each beneath his tree. We shuned the eyes of the king; we had not conquered in the field — A little stream rolled at my feet: I touched its light wave, with my spear. I touched it with my spear; not there was the soul of Ossian. It darkly rose, from thought to thought, and sent abroad the sigh.

Son of Morni, said the king; Dermid, hunter of roes! why are ye dark, like two rocks, each with its trickling waters? No wrath gathers on the soul of Fingal, against the chiefs of men. Ye are my strength in battle; the kindling of my joy in peace. My early voice was a pleasant gale to your ears, when Fillan prepared the bow. The son of Fingal is not here, nor yet the chace of the bounding roes. But why should the breakers of shields stand, darkened, far away?

Tall they strode towards the king; they saw him turned to Mora's wind. His tears came

me down, for his blue-eyed son, who slept in the cave of streams. But he brightened before them, and spoke to the broad-shielded kings.

Crominal, with woody rocks, and misty top, the field of winds, pours forth, to the sight, blue Lubar's streamy roar. Behind it rolls clear-winding Lavath, in the still vale of deer. A cave is dark in a rock; above it strong-winged eagles dwell; broad-headed oaks, before it, found in Cluna's wind. Within his locks of youth, is Ferad-artho*), blue-eyed

*) Ferad-artho was the son of Cairbar Mac-Cormac, king of Ireland. He was the only one remaining of the race of Conar, the son of Trenmor, the first Irish monarch, according to Ossian. In order to make this passage thoroughly understood, it may not be improper to recapitulate some part of what has been said in preceding notes. — Upon the death of Conar the son of Trenmor, his son Cormac succeeded on the Irish throne. Cormac reigned long. His children were, Cairbar, who succeeded him, and Ros-crana, the first wife of Fingal. Cairbar, long before the death of his father Cormac, had taken to wife Bos-gala, the daughter of Colgar, one of

eyed king, the son of broad-shielded Cairbar, from Ullin of the roes. He listens to the voice of

the most powerful chiefs in Connaught; and had, by her, Artho, afterwards king of Ireland. Soon after Artho arrived at man's estate, his mother Bos-gala died, and Cairbar took to wife Beltanno, the daughter of Conachar of Ullin, who brought him a son, whom he called Ferad-artho, i. e. *a man in the place of Artho*. The occasion of the name was this. Artho, when his brother was born, was absent, on an expedition in the south of Ireland. A false report was brought to his father, that he was killed.

— Cairbar, to use the words of the poem on the subject, *darkened for his fair-haired son. He turned to the young beam of light, the son of Beltanno of Conachar. Thou shalt be Ferad-artho, he said, a fire before thy race.* Cairbar, soon after, died, nor did Artho long survive him. Artho was succeeded, in the Irish throne, by his son Cormac, who, in his minority, was murdered by Cairbar, the son of Borbar-duthul.

— Ferad-artho, says tradition, was very young, when the expedition of Fingal, to settle him on the throne of Ireland, happened. During the short reign of young Cormac, Ferad-artho lived at the royal palace of Temora. Upon the
mur-

of Condan, as, grey, he bends in feeble light.
He listens, for his foes dwell in the echoing
halls of Temora. He comes, at times, abroad,
in

murder of the king, Condan, the bard, conveyed
Ferad-artho, privately, to the cave of Cluna,
behind the mountain Crommal, in Ulster, where
they both lived concealed, during the usurpation
of the family of Atha. All these particulars,
concerning Ferad-artho, may be gathered from
the compositions of Ossian: A bard, less
ancient, has delivered the whole history, in a
poem just now in my possession. It has little
merit, if we except the scene between Ferad-
artho, and the messengers of Fingal, upon their
arrival, in the valley of Cluna. After hearing
of the great actions of Fingal, the young prince
proposes the following questions concerning him,
to Gaul and Dermid. — “Is the king tall
as the rock of my cave? Is his spear a fir of
Cluna? Is he a rough-winged blast, on the
mountain, which takes the green oak by the
head, and tears it from its hill? — Glitters
Lubar within his strides, when he sends his sta-
tely steps along? — Nor is he tall, said Gaul,
as that rock: nor glitter streams within his stri-
des, but his soul is a mighty flood, like the
strength of Ullin’s seas.”

in the skirts of mist, to pierce the bounding
roes. When the sun looks on the field, nor
by the rock, nor stream, is he! He shuns the
race of Bolga, who dwell in his father's hall.
Tell him, that Fingal lifts the spear, and that
his foes, perhaps, may fail.

Lift up, O Gaul, the shield before him.
Stretch, Dermid, Temora's spear. Be thy voi-
ce in his ear, o Carril, with the deeds of his
fathers. Lead him to green Moi-lena, to the
dusky field of ghosts; for there I fall forward,
in battle, in the folds of war. Before dun
night descends, come to high Dunmora's top.
Look, from the grey rolling of mist, on Lena
of the streams. If there my standard shall float
on wind, over Lubar's gleaming course, then
has not Fingal failed in the last of his fields.

Such were his words: nor aught replied
the silent, striding kings. They looked side-
long, on Erin's host, and darkened, as they
went. — Never before had they left the
king, in the midst of the stormy field. —
Behind them, touching at times his harp, the
grey-haired Carril moved. He foresaw the fall
of the people, and mournful was the sound! —

It

It was like a breeze, that comes, by fits, over
Lego's reedy lake; when sleep half - descends
on the hunter, within his mossy cave.

Why bends the bard of Cona, said Fin-
gal, over his secret stream? — Is this a ti-
me for sorrow, father of low - laid Oscar? Be
the warriors *) remembered in peace; when
ecchoing

*) Oscar and Fillan are here, emphatically, called
the warriors. Ossian was not forgetful of them,
when, to use his own expression, *peace returned*
to the land. His plaintive poems, concerning
the death of these young heroes, were very nu-
merous. I had occasion, in a preceding note,
to give a translation of one of them, (a dialo-
gue between Clatho and Bos - mina) in this I
shall lay before the reader a fragment of another.
The greatest, and, perhaps, the most interesting
part of the poem, is lost. What remains, is a
soliloquy of Malvina, the daughter of Toscar, so
often mentioned in Ossian's compositions. She
sitting alone, in the vale of Moi - lutha, is re-
presented as descrying, at a distance, the ship
which carried the body of Oscar to Morven.

* Malvina is like the bow of the shower, in
the secret valley of streams; it is bright, but the

ecchoing shields are heard no more. Bend,
then, in grief, over the flood, where blows
the

drops of heaven roll on its blended light. They
say, that I am fair within my locks, but, on
my brightness, is the wandering of tears. Dark-
ness flies over my soul, as the dusky wave of
the breeze, along the grafs of Lutha. — Yet
have not the roes failed me, when I moved
between the hills. Pleasant, beneath my white
hand, arose the sound of harps. What then,
daughter of Lutha, travels over thy soul, like
the dreary path of a ghost, along the nightly
beam? — Should the young warrior fall, in
the roar of his troubled fields! — Young vir-
gins of Lutha, arise, call back the wandering
thoughts of Malvina. Awake the voice of the
harp, along my ecchoing vale. Then shall my
soul come forth, like a light from the gates of
the morn, when clouds are rolled around them,
with their broken sides,

“Dweller of my thoughts, by night, whose
form ascends in troubled fields, why dost thou
stir-up my soul, thou far-distant son of the
king? — Is that the ship of my love, its
dark course thro’ the ridges of ocean? How art
thou so sudden, Oscar, from the heath of
shields?” —

The

the mountain-breeze. Let them pass on thy soul, the blue-eyed dwellers of Lena. — But Erin rolls to war, wide-tumbling, rough, and dark. Lift, Ossian, lift the shield. — I am alone, my son!

As comes the sudden voice of winds to the becalmed ship of Inis-huna, and drives it large, along the deep, dark rider of the wave: so the voice of Fingal sent Ossian, tall, along the heath. He lifted high his shining shield, in the dusky wing of war: like the broad, blank moon, in the skirt of a cloud, before the storms arise.

Loud, from moss-covered Mora, poured down, at once, the broad-winged war. Fingal led his people forth, king of Morven of streams. — On high spreads the eagle's wing. His grey hair is poured on his shoulders broad. In thunder are his mighty strides. He often stood, and saw behind, the wide-gleaming rolling of armour. — A rock he seemed,

The rest of this poem, it is said, consisted of a dialogue between Ullin and Malvina, wherein the distress of the latter is carried to the highest pitch.

ed, grey over with ice, whose woods are high in wind. Bright streams leap from its head, and spread their foam on blasts.

Now he came to Lubar's cave, where Filan darkly slept. Bran still lay on the broken shield: the eagle-wing is strewed on winds. Bright, from withered furze, looked forth the hero's spear. — Then grief stirred the soul of the king, like whirlwinds blackening on a lake. He turned his sudden step, and leaned on his bending spear.

White-breasted Bran came bounding with joy to the known path of Fingal. He came, and looked towards the cave, where the blue-eyed hunter lay; for he was wont to stride, with morning, to the dewy bed of the roe. — It was then the tears of the king came down, and all his soul was dark. — But as the rising wind rolls away the storm of rain, and leaves the white streams to the sun, and high hills with their heads of grass: so the returning war brightened the mind of Fingal. He bounded *), on his spear, over Lubar, and struck

*) The poetical hyperboles of Ossian were, afterwards, taken in the literal sense, by the ignorant

struck his echoing shield. His ridgy host bend forward, at once, with all their pointed steel.

Nor

vulgar; and they firmly believed, that Fingal, and his heroes, were of a gigantic stature. There are many extravagant fictions founded upon the circumstance of Fingal leaping at once over the river Lubar. Many of them are handed down in tradition. The Irish compositions concerning Fingal, invariably speak of him as a giant. Of these Hiberniad poems there are now many in my hands. From the language, and allusions to the times in which they were writ, I should fix the date of their composition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In some passages, the poetry is far from wanting merit, but the fable is unnatural, and the whole conduct of the pieces injudicious. I shall give one instance of the extravagant fictions of the Irish bards, in a poem which they, most unjustly, ascribe to Ossian. The story of it is this — Ireland being threatened with an invasion from some part of Scandinavia, Fingal sent Ossian, Oscar and Ca-olt, to watch the bay, in which it was expected, the enemy was to land. Oscar, unluckily, fell asleep, before the Scandinavians appeared; and, great as he was, says the Irish bard,

Nor Erin heard, with fear, the sound :
 wide they came rolling along. Dark Malthos,
 in the wing of war, looks forward from shag-
 gy brows. Next rose that beam of light Hid-
 alla; then the side-long-looking gloom of Ma-
 ronnán. Blue-shielded Clonar lifts the spear;
 Cormar shakes his bushy locks on the wind. —

Slowly

bard, he had one bad property, that no less
 could waken him, before his time, than cutting
 off one of his fingers, or throwing a great stone
 against his head; and it was dangerous to come
 near him on those occasions, till he had recover-
 ed himself, and was fully awake. Caolt, who
 was employed by Ossian to waken his son, made
 choice of throwing the stone against his head,
 as the least dangerous expedient. The stone, re-
 bounding from the hero's head, shook, as it
 rolled along, the hill for three miles round.
 Oscar rose in rage, fought bravely, and, singly,
 vanquished a wing of the enemy's army. —
 Thus the bard goes on, till Fingal put an end
 to the war, by the total rout of the Scandina-
 vians. Puerile, and even despicable, as these
 fictions are, yet Keating and O' Flaherty have
 no better authority than the poems which contain
 them, for all that they write concerning Fion
 Mac-comnal, and the pretended militia of Ire-
 land.

Slowly, from behind a rock, rose the bright form of Atha. First appeared his two pointed spears, then the half of his burnished shield: like the rising of a nightly meteor, over the vale of ghosts. But when he shone all abroad: the hosts plunged, at once, into strife. The gleaming waves of steel are poured on either side.

As meet two troubled seas, with the rolling of all their waves, when they feel the wings of contending winds, in the rock-sided firth of Lumon; along the echoing hills is the dim course of ghosts; from the blast fall the torn groves on the deep, amidst the foamy path of whales: — So mixed the hosts. — Now Fingal; now Cathmor came abroad. — The dark tumbling of death is before them: the gleam of broken steel is rolled on their steps, as, loud, the high-bounding kings hewed down the ridge of shields.

Maronnan fell, by Fingal, laid large across a stream. The waters gathered by his side, and leapt grey over his bossy shield. — Clon- ar is pierced by Cathmor: nor yet lay the chief on earth. An oak seized his hair in his fall.

fall. His helmet rolled on the ground. By its thong, hung his broad shield; over it wandered his streaming blood. Tla-min *) shall weep, in the hall, and strike her heaving breast.

Nor

*) Tla-min, *mildly-soft*. The loves of Clonar and Tla-min were rendered famous in the north, by a fragment of a Lyric poem, still preserved, which is ascribed to Ossian. Be it the composition of whom it will, its poetical merit may, perhaps, excuse me, for inserting it here. It is a dialogue between Clonar and Tla-min. She begins with a soliloquy, which he overhears.

“Clonar, son of Conglas of I-mor, young hunter of dun-sided roes! where art thou laid, amidst rushes, beneath the passing wing of the breeze? — I behold thee, my love, in the plain of thy own dark streams! The clung thorn is rolled by the wind, and rustles along his shield. Bright in his locks he lies: the thoughts of his dreams fly, darkening, over his face. Thou thinkest of the battles of Ossian, young son of the echoing isle!

“Half-hid, in the grove, I sit down. Fly back, ye mists of the hill. Why should ye hide her love from the blue eyes of Tla-min of harps?

CLONAR.

Nor did Ossian forget the spear, in the
wing of his war. He strewed the field with
dead. — Young Hidalla came, Soft voice

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CLONAR.

"As the spirit, seen in a dream, flies off from
our opening eyes; we think, we behold his
bright path between the closing hills: so fled the
daughter of Clungal, from the sight of Clonar
of shields. Arise, from the gathering of trees;
blue-eyed Tla-min, arise.

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TLAMIN.

"I turn me away from his steps. Why should
he know of my love! My white breast is heaving
over sighs, as foam on the dark course of streams.
— But he passes away, in his arms! —
Son of Conglas, my soul is sad.

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CLONAR.

"It was the shield of Fingal! the voice of kings
from Selma of harps! — My path is towards
green Erin. Arise, fair light, from thy shades.
Come to the field of my soul, there is the spread-
ing of hosts. Arise, on Clonar's troubled
soul, young daughter of blue-shielded Clun-
gal. " —

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Clungal was the chief of I-mor, one of the
Hebrides.

of streamy Clonra ! Why dost thou lift the steel? — O that we met, in the strife of song, in thy own rushy vale! — Malthos beheld him low, and darkened as he rushed along. On either side of a stream, we bend in the echoing strife. — Heaven comes rolling down: around burst the voices of squally winds. — Hills are clothed, at times, in fire. Thunder rolls in wreaths of mist. — In darkness shrunk the foe: Morven's warriors stood aghast. — Still I bent over the stream, amidst my whistling locks.

Then rose the voice of Fingal, and the sound of the flying foe. I saw the king, at times, in lightning, darkly-striding in his might. I struck my echoing shield, and hung forward on the steps of Alnecma: the foe is rolled before me, like a wreath of smok.

The sun looked forth from his cloud. The hundred streams of Moi-lena shone. Slow rose the blue columns of mist, against the glittering hill. — Where are the mighty kings? *) — Nor

*) Fingal and Cathmor. The conduct of the poet, in this passage, is remarkable. His numerous de-

Nor by that stream, nor wood, are they! —
I hear the clang of arms! — Their strife is
in the bosom of mist. — Such is the con-
tending of spirits in a nightly cloud, when
they strive for the wintry wings of winds, and
the rolling of the foam-covered waves.

I rush-

descriptions of single combats had already exhaust-
ed the subject. Nothing new, nor adequate to
our high idea of the kings, could be said. Ossian,
therefore, throws a *column of mist* over the
whole, and leaves the combat to the imagination
of the reader. — Poets have almost uni-
versally failed in their descriptions of this sort.
Not all the strength of Homer could sustain;
with dignity, the *minutiæ* of a single combat.
The throwing of a spear, and the braying of
a shield, as some of our own poets most ele-
gantly express it, convey no grand ideas. Our
imagination stretches beyond, and, consequently,
despises, the description. It were, therefore,
well, for some poets, in my opinion, (tho' it
is, perhaps, somewhat singular) to have, so-
metimes, like Ossian, thrown *mist* over their
single combats.

I rushed along. The grey mist rose. —
 Tall, gleaming, they stood at Lubar. —
 Cathmor leaned against a rock. His half-fallen
 shield received the stream, that leapt from the
 moss above. — Towards him is the stride
 of Fingal; he saw the hero's blood. His sword
 fell slowly to his side. — He spoke, midst
 his darkening joy.

Yields the race of Borbar-duthul? Or still
 does he lift the spear? Not unheard is thy na-
 me, in Selma, in the green dwelling of stran-
 gers. It has come, like the breeze of his de-
 sert, to the ear of Fingal. — Come to my
 hall of feasts: the mighty fail, at times. No
 fire am I to low-laid foes: I rejoice not over
 the fall of the brave. — To close *) the wound

*) Fingal is very much celebrated, in tradition, for
 his knowledge in the virtues of herbs. The Irish
 poems, concerning him, often represent him,
 curing the wounds which his chiefs received in
 battle. They fable concerning him, that he was
 in possession of a cup, containing the essence of
 herbs, which instantaneously healed wounds.
 The knowledge of curing the wounded, was,
 till

wound is mine: I have known the herbs of the hills. I seized their fair heads, on high, as they waved by their secret streams. — Thou art dark and silent, king of Atha of strangers.

By Atha of the streams, he said, there rises a mossy rock. On its head is the wandering of boughs, within the course of winds. Dark, in its face, is a cave with its own loud rill. — There have I heard the tread of strangers *), when they passed to my hall of shells.

rill of late, universal among the Highlanders. We hear of no other disorder, which required the skill of physic. The wholesomeness of the climate, and an active life, spent in hunting, excluded diseases.

*) The hospitable disposition of Cathmor was unparalleled. He reflects, with pleasure, even in his last moments, on the relief he had afforded to strangers. The very tread of their feet was pleasant in his ear. — His hospitality was not passed unnoticed by succeeding bards; for, with them, it became a proverb, when they described the hospitable disposition of a hero, *that he was like Cathmor of Atha, the friend of strangers*. It will seem strange, that, in all the Irish

shells. Joy rose, like a flame, on my soul:
 I blest the ecchoing rock. Here be my dwell-
 ing, in darkness, in my grassy vale. From
 this I shall mount the breeze, that pursues my
 thistle's beard; or look down, on blue-winding
 Atha, from its wandering mist.

Why speaks the king of the tomb? —
 Ossian! the warrior has failed! — Joy meet
 thy soul, like a stream, Cathmor, friend of
 strangers! — My son, I hear the call of
 years; they take my spear as they pass along.
 Why does not Fingal, they seem to say, rest
 within his hall? Dost thou always delight in
 blood? In the tears of the sad? — No: ye
 darkly-rolling years, Fingal delights not in
 blood. Tears are wintry streams that waste
 away my soul. But, when I lie down to rest,
 then comes the mighty voice of war. It awak-
 es

traditions, there is no mention made of Cath-
 mor. This must be attributed to the revolutions
 and domestic confusions, which happened in that
 island, and utterly cut off all the real traditions
 concerning so ancient a period. All that we ha-
 ve related of the state of Ireland before the fifth
 century, is of late invention, and the work of ill-
 informed senachies and injudicious bards.

es me, in my hall, and calls forth all my steel. — It shall call it forth no more; Ossian, take thou thy father's spear. Lift it, in battle, when the proud arise.

My fathers, Ossian, trace my steps; my deeds are pleasant to their eyes. Wherever I come forth to battle, on my field, are their columns of mist. — But mine arm rescued the feeble; the haughty found, my rage was fire. Never over the fallen did mine eye rejoice. For this *) my fathers shall meet me, at
the

*) We see, from this passage, that, even in the times of Ossian, and, consequently, before the introduction of christianity, they had some idea of rewards and punishments after death. — Those who behaved, in life, with bravery and virtue, were received, with joy, to the airy halls of their fathers: but *the dark in soul*, to use the expression of the poet, were spurned away from *the habitation of heroes*, to wander on *all the winds*. Another opinion, which prevailed in those times, tended not a little to make individuals emulous to excel one another in martial achievements. It was thought, that, in the *hall of clouds*, every one had a seat, raised above others, in proportion as he excelled them, in

the gates of their airy halls, tall, with robes of light, with mildly-kindled eyes. But, to the proud in arms, they are darkened moons in heaven, which send the fire of night, red-wandering over their face.

Father of heroes, Trenmor, dweller of ed-dying winds! I give thy spear to Ossian, let thine eye rejoice. Thee have I seen, at times, bright from between thy clouds; so appear to my son, when he is to lift the spear: then shall he remember thy mighty deeds, though thou art now but a blast.

He gave the spear to my hand, and raised, at once, a stone on high, to speak to future times, with its grey head of moss. Beneath he placed a sword *) in earth, and one bright
bofs

valour, when he lived. — The simile in this paragraph is new, and, if I may use the expression of a bard, who alluded to it, *beautifully terrible*.

Mar dhubh-reül, an croma nan speur,
A thaomas teina na h' oicha,
Dearg-fruthach, air h'aighai' fein.

*) There are some stones still to be seen in the north, which were erected, as memorials of some
re-

bofs from his fhield. Dark in thought, a-whi-
le, he bends: his words, at length, came forth.

When thou, o ftone, fhalt moulder down,
and lofe thee, in the mofs of years, then fhall
the traveller come, and whiffling pafs away. —
Thou know'ft not, feeble wanderer, that fame
once fhone on Moi-lena. Here Fingal resigned
his fpear, after the laft of his fields. — Pafs
away, thou empty fhade; in thy voice there
is no renown. Thou dwelleft by fome peace-
ful ftream; yet a few years, and thou art go-
ne. No one remembers thee, thou dweller of
thick mift! — But Fingal fhall be clothed
with fame, a beam of light to other times;
for he went forth, in ecchoing fteel, to fave
the weak in arms.

Brightening in his fame, the king ftrode
to Lubar's founding oak, where it bent, from
its rock, over the bright tumbling ftream. Be-
neath it is a narrow plain, and the found of
the

remarkable transactions between the ancient chiefs.
There are generally found, beneath them, fome
piece of arms, and a bit of half-burnt wood.
The caufe of placing the laft there, is not men-
tioned in tradition.

the fount of the rock. — Here the standard *) of Morven poured its wreaths on the wind, to mark the way of Ferad - artho, from his secret vale. — Bright, from his parted west, the sun of heaven looked abroad. The hero saw his people, and heard their shouts of joy. In broken ridges round, they glittered to the beam. The king rejoiced, as a hunter in his own green vale, when, after the storm is rolled away, he sees the gleaming sides of the rock. The green thorn shakes its head in their face; from their top, look forward the roes.

**) Grey, at his mossy cave, is bent the aged form of Clonmal. The eyes of the bard had

*) The erecting of his standard on the bank of Lubar, was the signal, which Fingal, in the beginning of the book, promised to give to the chiefs, who went to conduct Ferad - artho to the army, should he himself prevail in battle. This standard here (and in every other part of Ossian's poems, where it is mentioned) is called, the *sun-beam*. The reason of this appellation, I gave, more than once, in my notes in the preceding volume.

**) The poet changes the scene to the valley of Lona, whither Sul - malla had been sent, by Cathmor,

had failed. He leaned forward, on his staff. Bright in her locks, before him, Sul-malla listened to the tale; the tale of the kings of Atha, in the days of old. The noise of battle had ceased in his ear: he stopt, and raised the secret sigh. The spirits of the dead, they said, often lightened over his soul. He saw the king of Atha low, beneath his bending tree.

Why art thou dark? said the maid. The strife of arms is past. Soon *) shall he come to thy cave, over thy winding streams. The sun looks from the rocks of the west. The mists of the lake arise. Grey, they spread on that hill, the rushy dwelling of roes. From the mist shall my king appear! Behold, he comes in his arms. Come to the cave of Clonmal, o my best beloved!

It

mor, before the battle. Clonmal, an aged bard, or rather druid, as he seems here to be endued with a prescience of events, had long dwelt there, in a cave. This scene is awful and solemn, and calculated to throw a melancholy gloom over the mind.

*) Cathmor had promised, in the seventh book, to come to the cave of Clonmal, after the battle was over.

It was the spirit of Cathmor, stalking, large, a gleaming form. He sunk by the hollow stream, that roared between the hills. — “It was but the hunter, she said, who searches for the bed of the roe. His steps are not forth to war; his spouse expects him with night. — He shall, whistling, return, with the spoils of the dark-brown hinds.” — Her eyes are turned to the hill; again the stately form came down. She rose, in the midst of joy. He retired in mist. Gradual vanish his limbs of smok, and mix with the mountain-wind. — Then she knew that he fell! “King of Erin, art thou low!” — Let Ossian forget her grief; it wastes the soul of age *).

Even-

*) The abrupt manner, in which Ossian quits the story of Sul-malla, is judicious. His subject led him immediately, to relate the restoration of the family of Conar to the Irish throne; which we may consider effectually done, by the defeat and death of Cathmor, and the arrival of Ferad-artho in the Caledonian army. To pursue, here, the story of the *maid of Inis-buna*, which was foreign to the subject, would be altogether inconsistent with the rapid manner of Ossian, and a breach

on

Evening came down on Moi-lena, Grey
 rolled the streams of the land. Loud came
 forth the voice of Fingal; the beam of oaks
 arose,

on unity of time and action, one of the fundamental essentials of the *epopee*, the rules of which our Celtic bard gathered from nature, not from the precepts of Critics. — Neither did the poet totally desert the beautiful Sul-malla, deprived of her lover, and a stranger, as she was, in a foreign land. Tradition relates, that Ossian, the next day after the decisive battle between Fingal and Cathmor, went to find out Sul-malla, in the valley of Lona. His address to her, which is still preserved, I here lay before the reader.

“Awake, thou daughter of Connor, from the
 fern-skirted cavern of Lona. Awake, thou sun-
 beam in deserts; warriors one day must fail.
 They move forth, like terrible lights; but, often,
 their cloud is near. — Go to the valley
 of streams, to the wandering of herds, on Luma-
 mon; there dwells, in his lazy mist, the man
 of many days. But he is unknown, Sul-malla,
 like the thistle of the rocks of roes; it shakes
 its grey beard, in the wind, and falls, unseen
 of our eyes. — Not such are the kings of
 men, their departure is a meteor of fire, which
 pours

arose. The people gathered round with gladness; with gladness blended with shades. They side-long looked to the king, and beheld his unfinished joy. — Pleasant, from the way of the desert, the voice of music came. It seemed, at first, the noise of a stream, far-distant on its rocks. Slow it rolled along the hill,

pours its red course, from the desert, over the bosom of night.

“He is mixed with the warriors of old, those fires that have hid their heads. At times shall they come forth in song. Not forgot has the warrior failed. — He has not seen, Sul-malla, the fall of a beam of his own: no fair-haired son, in his blood, young troubler of the field. — I am lonely, young branch of Luman, I may hear the voice of the feeble, when my strength shall have failed in years, for young Oscar has ceased, on his field. — * * *

The rest of the poem is lost; from the story of it, which is still preserved, we understand, that Sul-malla returned to her own country. Sul-malla makes a considerable figure in the poem which immediately follows in the IV. volume; her behaviour in that piece accounts for that partial regard, with which the poet speaks of her throughout Temora.

hill, like the ruffled wing of a breeze, when it takes the tufted beard of the rocks, in the still season of night. — It was the voice of Con-dan, mixed with Carril's trembling harp. They came with blue-eyed Ferad - artho, to Mora of the streams.

Sudden bursts the song from our bards, on Lena: the host struck their shields midst the sound. Gladness rose brightening on the king, like the beam of a cloudy day, when it rises, on the green hill, before the roar of winds. — He struck the bossy shield of kings; at once they cease around. The people lean forward, from their spears, towards the voice of their land *).

Sons

*) Before I finish my notes, it may not be altogether improper to obviate an objection, which may be made to the credibility of the story of Temora, as related by Ossian. It may be asked, whether it is probable, that Fingal could perform such actions as are ascribed to him in this book, at an age when his grandson, Oscar had acquired so much reputation in arms. To this it may be answered, that Fingal was but very young [book 4th] when he took to wife Ros-crana, who soon after became the mother of Ossian.

Ossian

Sons of Morven, spread the feast; send the night away on song. Ye have shone around me, and the dark storm is past. My people are the windy rocks, from which I spread my eagle-wings, when I rush forth to renown, and seize it on its field. — Ossian, thou hast the spear of Fingal: it is not the staff of a boy, with which he strews the thistle round, young wanderer of the field. — No: it is the lance of the mighty, with which they stretched forth their hands to death. Look to thy fathers, my son; they are awful beams. — With morning lead Ferad-artho forth to the echoing halls

Ossian was also extremely young, when he married Ever-allin, the mother of Oscar. Tradition relates, that Fingal was but eighteen years old at the birth of his son Ossian; and that Ossian was much about the same age, when Oscar, his son, was born. Oscar, perhaps, might be about twenty, when he was killed, in the battle of Gabhra: [book Ist] so the age of Fingal, when the decisive battle was fought between him and Cathmor, was just fifty-six years. In those times of activity and health, the natural strength and vigour of a man was little abated, at such an age; so that there is nothing improbable in the actions of Fingal, as related in this book.

halls of Temora. Remind him of the kings of Erin; the stately forms of old. — Let not the fallen be forgot; they were mighty in the field. Let Carril pour his song, that the kings may rejoice in their mist. — To-morrow I spread my sails to Selma's shaded walls; where streamy Duthula winds through the seats of roes. —

END of TEMORA.

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THE END OF TEMORA

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